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WANDER PICTURES

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BY

BART KENNEDY

AUTHOR OF "A TRAMP CAMP"

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ac.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY TATTON WINTER



Q.X.8.14

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1906

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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To

Alfred,

Lord Northcliffe,

In Memory of

A Summer Voyage over the

Western Ocean.

By the same Author.

DARAB'S WINE-CUP.
THE WANDERING ROMANOFF.
A MAN ADRIFT.
A SAILOR TRAMP.
LONDON IN SHADOW.
A TRAMP IN SPAIN.
SLAVERY.
THE GREEN SPHINX.
A TRAMP CAMP.

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WANDER PICTURES.

ON WANDERING.

I.

ONLY by wandering and travelling and going hither and thither is it that a man's mind grows to its full size. Only in this way can he become really educated.

To say what I am going to say is against myself, but say it I must. It is this:

Did I have the power I would destroy all the books of the world and let men see and fend for themselves in the mental sense. Did I have the power I would decree that all men wandered—so that they would get to know their fellows. I would have no man get knowledge in second-hand ways. I would have all men experience heat and cold, hunger and stress and hardship for themselves. And all women, too.

Imagination. Away with it. Let us experience the fact.

Therefore it is that if the power lay within me I would blot from the world all books. I would strike from man the fetters of the past. I would decree that the world's people

constantly wandered from clime to clime, over oceans, through nations of strange peoples. I would have it that there would be a constant passing and interpassing of human beings.

And so there would come into human life a real knowledge. No longer would men pore over tomes of alleged knowledge.

But what of the world's art, and the world's masterpieces of enginry, and its great wealth and palaces, and its glorious and wonderful treasures of stone?

I can hear you ask this question. And this is my reply :—

All these things are not worth a snap of the fingers. These things are but fetters that man will shake off when the knowledge comes to him. This whole civilization is but the sinister fruit of stay-at-home cowardice. Its art itself is but a disease. It is a thing that will pass. These great world-towns are but loathsome, nightmare places.

This whole civilization isn't worth the tinder that even now is being prepared to set it alight and destroy it. It is not worth the lighted sticks that will be put under it so that it will burn and scatter to the four winds.

This policemanized civilization. Say nothing about it, my friend. It is a disease from which the man of the future will set himself free. The man of the future will wonder why the men of the present day were such cowards as to bear the yoke of thieving, lying lawyers and politicians and police.

This civilization, indeed!

No man of sense can think of it with feelings other than those of contempt and disgust.

It is the fruit of human slavery. The fungus spreading from a stupid, cowardly standing still.

II.

BUT let us get back to a worthier subject.

In wandering the blunted senses of man would attain to their former freshness. His sight would become keen, his brain quick and alert, his limbs supple. He would attain to the promise that lies within him. He would become as a fine, wandering Arab.

Destroyed would be the hideous and accursed power of gold.

Talk not to me of man's paltry inventions. Of his empire over iron and fire.

Wandering would rid man from the slavery of machines. The machine is the Frankenstein that is now devouring him. He has sold his power—his heritage—to a slave of his own creating.

Who would do the world's work, you ask?

No one.

Work, as the world now knows it, would be abolished. Man would become a glorious and mighty being who wandered along. Powers would fructify and ripen within him. Powers

infinitely subtler and mightier than the machine Frankensteins that now have him in thrall. Slaves would disappear. Glorious men and women would roam over the world. The ideal of humanity would be enjoyment and happiness. Gone would be the dark and cringing and loathsome ideal of dull monotonous labour.

Labour! Could a fine savage of old arise from the dust, he would shake with mighty laughter to think that the curse he had laid on the shoulders of foemen he had beaten in battle had become the blessing and the ideal of this thing called Civilization.

Let it be understood that labour is an utter and absolute curse.

But here I must pause. For I am saying a thing that needs not to be said. For even in this hideous, chaotic, anarchic state, called Civilization, the truth that labour is a curse is patent to all men who are strong. They labour, you say? Ah, with their brains, my friend, with their brains.

World-wandering would make all men acute and strong. They would become kind and wise and subtle and stately and courteous. They would be a law unto themselves. They would in the ripeness of time speak the one language.

It is my firm belief that civilized man is the puny and degenerate descendant of a glorious being who once lived and roamed in the world. Civilized man is a wretched and

puny atavism who can neither think nor act for himself. The world is immeasurably overstocked with blind-eyed, helpless, crippled atavisms. Indeed, the only thing that is big about civilized man is his egotism.

You will think I am a pessimist because I say this. But I am not. I am an optimist. For I am a firm believer in man's destiny. The time is coming when he will shake this civilization curse from him. The loathsome towns will be broken up. These blemishes will disappear from the world's face. The slave-states that are now called nations will fade away. These myriads of wretched, puny coward-men will die out.

Fewer men will be in the world. But they will be fine and strong and great. They will obey but the primal and consonant laws that lie within them.

Gone will be the disciplined slave-hordes that are now called armies—these hordes that are used by dishonest, acute, and crafty men for the crushing of other slaves. Gone will be the detestable machines with their accompanying smoke and filth. Gone will be the prostitution of the man and the woman and the child. Gone will be hideous and accursed labour. Gone will be hypocrisy. Gone will be the infamous power of gold. The beautiful world will be green again. And in it will be glorious and beautiful men and women dowered with the magical powers that now lie dormant in the men of civilization. These glorious beings

will have within them the forces of the earth and the heavens.

The secrets of space will lie in their hands.

They will go—wandering over a world green and fair and beautiful and strange.

FROM THE PYRENEES TO PARIS.

I.—AT A GASCON WEDDING FEAST.

I ENTERED Hospitalet on a bright, clear Saturday morning after tramping through the Pyrenees from the frontier of Spain. I was hungry and worn out. The night before I had to sleep out, or rather weather it out, in a bleak storm-shelter close to the summit of the mountain chain. I had lost my way in coming from Soldao, in the Republic of Andorra—darkness had come upon me—and I had stumbled upon the shelter by chance. It was a stroke of luck that saved my life. Had I not found it I would have gone under, for it was cold—being near the end of October—and the summit was covered with snow.

Hospitalet was the first town in France—the frontier town—and I entered it as one might enter home or a haven after being worn and battered through struggling through a storm. I was unkempt, and haggard looking and unshaven — just a tramp from the mountains with knapsack on his back, and a whip in his hand to keep off dogs.

This town was not what one could call large —only a hundred and forty people lived in it. But it was a place of houses and warmth and shelter and food and wine. Never mind the size of it. It was a place where I could

get something to eat, and where I could sleep. A place where I could make the money in my pocket do its duty. Having money in one's pocket and not being able to spend it is one of the tantalizing happenings of life.

As I entered the only street of Hospitalet I noticed a priest talking to a group of men. Over I went, and after saluting the party generally I asked the priest in bad Spanish as to the whereabouts of an inn. The priest replied to me courteously in French, and I was as wise as I was at first. I looked at him and he looked at me, and again I had recourse to my bad Spanish. And again he replied in French.

I was beginning to feel rather helpless when someone suddenly came to the rescue. It was a woman about forty, with very high cheek bones and a fresh coloured face. She was carrying a jug of water, and was dressed after the style of the pictures I had seen of French peasant women. Her voice was rather shrill and loud, but there was a pleasing quality in it. She spoke to me, and again I had recourse to my Spanish. She seemed to understand, for she beckoned to me to follow her.

As I walked down the street after her I began to take note of the town. Whilst it was only a tiny place here in the Pyrenees, there was still a brisk, lively air about it. Between it and the town of Andorra there was all the difference in the world. Hospitalet was in touch with modernity, with the twen-

tieth century. It was a small, outlying post of civilization. Andorra was as it was hundreds of years ago. There was about it an atmosphere of absolute stillness—as though it were a place of a dream. It went on of itself—was out of touch with the world and its interests and enterprises. It was a place of perfection, and beautiful peace. On the other hand, Hospitalet was in touch with the fever and hurry and unrest of civilization. The throb of its life might in a sense be faint, but for all that it was beating in unison with one of the world's great centres—Paris. This little place in the mountains so far, far off was still France—was still Paris—was still a part of the life of the modern world. I had stepped from the fifteenth to the twentieth century.

I followed the woman into an inn, and I was promptly welcomed by the proprietor—the Maire of Hospitalet! He was tall and gaunt and hungry looking—hardly like an ideal municipal personage.

He escorted me into the kitchen, and here it was that I made the acquaintance of Leopold, the cook. He was working with his pots and pans over a log fire in a great open fireplace. The moment I came in he laid down a long spoon—with which he had been stirring soup—and shook me by the hand as if I had been an old friend of his who had suddenly turned up after years of absence. And then he gave me a basin of his soup—the most delicious I had ever tasted in my

life. Good old Leopold. He was worth his weight in gold. He could see that I was fagged and tired and hungry, and that his soup was the thing to set me right.

Leopold was a middle-sized, well set up man of about forty, with black hair and moustache and imperial, and a face olive of colour. A typical Gascon. His eyes were black and quick of glance and piercing. He looked like a Gascon knight of old who had come back to life again to work here as cook in the midst of pots and pans and dishes and soups and joints and fowls. I liked him. He knew a little Spanish, and we managed to converse after I had been revived with his delicious soup. He had been a soldier in Algeria, he told me. He had fought with the Arabs and had been wounded three times. Indeed, he had the alert, ready move of a soldier who had been salted, of a campaigner who had given and taken hard knocks. He was a native of Tarascon.

The wife of the Maire was bustling in and out and around the kitchen as Leopold and I carried on our halting but vivid conversation. She was a fine, handsome-looking woman, very much younger than the Maire.

Suddenly there was the sound of many people laughing and talking loudly outside the inn, and all hands rushed to the door—Leopold, the Maire, his wife, his little daughter, and myself. It was a gay, merry wedding party. A Gascon wedding party. There was

the bride with her white veil, and the bridegroom, and the bridesmaids, and the bridegroom's best man, and the friends and relations of the party generally. All of them trooped into the inn, laughing and talking loudly and hilariously. They greeted Leopold, and the Maire, and his wife, and the one-eyed servant, Marie Louise, with great heartiness. Even I, the stranger from the mountains, came in for a greeting. They were a fine, jovial, jolly lot of people. It did me good to see and to hear them. They had come to the inn to hold their wedding feast. Leopold had been preparing for the glorious event through the whole of the morning.

They went off to wait for it in the best room, and Leopold redoubled his efforts in the kitchen. He was giving loud, rapid orders to those around him, and rushing here and there with his long spoon stirring this or that. Now he was brandishing a wooden roller, or cutting up onions or garlic—or slicing ham. In fact he was excelling himself—doing three or four things at once. Fowls and joints were turning and whirling before the fire. Pots of vegetables were on the boil or coming to the boil. There was in the kitchen the combined, wholesome fragrance of the cooking of meat and vegetables with an open fire. Leopold was cooking things in the way that they ought to be cooked—in the open, with air around them. Ovens spoil food. Food that is cooked before or on an open fire has far

more nourishment and gives forth a delicious fragrance. It is really worth eating.

All the while that Leopold was working he was talking to me. At first I thought I was in the way and I offered to go, but he would not let me. He went on telling me about Algeria and the Arabs, and of other things, the drift of which I could not quite catch, whilst he was busying round. And occasionally he would pour me out a glass of red wine. He was a glorious fellow.

At last the great and supreme moment arrived. The soup was ready! Just a little before that the bridegroom's best man had come into the kitchen to see how Leopold was getting on. The wedding party was impatient to begin the feast. The soup was ready! Leopold clapped his hands, and into the kitchen rushed the Maire, and his wife and his little daughter, and the servant Marie Louise. Each of them caught up a plate from a pile of plates that had been warming before the fire. Leopold deftly ladled the soup into the plates from a big, iron pot, and the four of them marched triumphantly with the plates of soup to the best room, the Maire's little daughter leading. Leopold paused for a moment whilst they were going, looked at me, smiled, and lit a cigarette. For him it was a moment of triumph. The engagement had begun. We could hear shouts and laughter coming from the best room as the soup arrived. And then the Maire's

little daughter was back again into the kitchen to get another plate, and the Maire was back, and so was his wife, and Marie Louise. And Leopold was again ladling soup deftly from the pot.

But where Leopold covered himself with glory was in the carving of the fowls. He used a short bladed knife with unexampled skill. And then came the fruit, and the coffee, and the cognac. And then there was a slight pause, and Leopold sat down to rest a little. He had laboured worthily and well.

He was still smoking and taking his ease when the Maire came to the kitchen for him. The wedding party wanted to see him.

A great shout greeted Leopold when he got to the door of the best room. And then everybody spoke to him at once. I gathered that they were congratulating him upon the skill with which he had prepared the feast.

After that the toasts and songs began, and I was invited to join the party, at the instance, I believe, of Leopold. The bridegroom's best man, who was the village postman, was very civil and friendly in his manner towards me. He was a dashing, fine-looking fellow, of about thirty, and was evidently a great favourite with the women. He was the prime spirit of the party—going here and there, keeping up the merriment generally. He introduced me to the whole party—about twenty in all. I don't know who or what I was introduced as, but I followed him round from one to the

other, shaking hands and bowing ceremoniously when it was too far to stretch my hand across the table. The bride was named Astræa. She was hardly what could be called a good-looking woman. She had high cheek-bones, and her frame was square and strong-looking—almost like a man's. But she looked honest and hearty. She had the look of a woman who worked out in the fields. I should say that she was about twenty-three years old.

The bridegroom was named Joseph. He was a pale, rather slight young fellow, with an intelligent face. He had not the look of a Gascon. Two or three of the women were really good-looking, and all of them had the colour and the look of physical vigour that come to those who work out in the open air.

The bride's health was drunk, and my glass being filled up by the postman, I drank with the rest of them. And then came the health of the bridegroom. And after that a gentleman of the party obliged with a song. He stood in his place at the table, and gave it forth with vigour. After he had finished everybody applauded loudly, and the singer's health was drunk. And then somebody else sang.

An atmosphere of Southern gaiety and sparkle was over the scene. The Gascons were in no way like the Catalans, who lived but a few miles from them over on the other side of the mountains. Spain was, so to speak, but a step away, and still the difference in the peoples was hardly to be described. The Gascons

were as Southern in their manner and their air as were the people of Andalusia. They had the same gaiety and heartiness and spontaneity. The same sense and love of humour, and the same interest in the stranger. A light, gay-hearted people. They lived farther north than the Catalans, and still they were Southern in characteristics, whilst the Catalans were Northern. Taken in the mass, the men of Catalonia were severe and dour and hard. The men of Gascony in France were as the men of Andalusia in Spain. The Southerners of different nations have more real resemblance to each other than they have to the Northerners of their own nation. Their temperaments are always attuned to the same key. And the same thing holds good the other way about. I mean with the Northerners. Go where you will—go to whatever country of the world you will, and this fact will always be apparent to you. The South is the South, and the North is the North, whether it be in Greenland or in Spain, or in Asia, or in America.

After a while the postman asked me to give a song. At first I refused, but after a little pressing I agreed to sing if Leopold sang. Leopold was called in from the kitchen, and then came my turn. I obliged with "The Harp that once through Tara's Halls."

Tremendous applause greeted me after I I had finished. The Gascons were indeed

polite and kindly people. I had never sung so badly in my life. The postman filled up my glass again, and my health was drunk with acclamation. And then I was asked to sing again. This time I favoured the wedding party with the "Minstrel Boy." My voice cracked as I got on to the first top note, but no one seemed to mind such a little thing as that. All eyes were bent on me with a most respectful regard. I finished, and again there was tremendous applause, and in the excitement the postman filled my glass to overflowing.

The tables were now cleared away, and the dancing began. The dancers made their own music by humming and singing as they danced. It was then that Leopold came up to me and suggested that I should go and have a sleep after my journey. But I declined. I thought that I might as well see the wedding feast to its end. My friend the postman got me a partner for the dance—one of the bridesmaids. But the waltz seemed too much for my skill as a dancer, and I declined the honour as gracefully as I was able. He then signed to me to kiss her. Not wishing to cause offence to anyone, I immediately endeavoured to follow out his suggestion. But the bridesmaid did not seem to be willing. My friend the postman, however, insisted. He held her tight, and I kissed her. Then he and she joined in the waltz.

The Maire came in now and danced with the bride, and Leopold danced with the Maire's

wife, and finally I took my courage in both hands and danced with the bridesmaid I had kissed.

After the dancing there was a dramatic entertainment, which was managed and costumed and performed by Leopold. The people stood around the wall of the room and waited for his entrance from the kitchen, where he had been dressing. He came in with a bound—dressed to represent an Arab. A towel was wound round his head, a sheet hung from his shoulders, acting, I suppose, as a burnous, and the legs of his trousers were rolled up very high. He had whitened his face with flour. I was at a loss to know why he did this, for I had always understood the Arabs were swarthy. But Leopold's Arab was probably one of a special kind.

For an instant he stood motionless in the middle of the floor, and then he let a yell out of him that was fit to waken the dead. The yell was received by the wedding party with fits of laughter. I laughed uproariously myself, though I hadn't the faintest notion as to where the joke came in. It was only fair, however, that I should laugh, for had not these polite people applauded my villainous singing? Politeness begets politeness. After the yell Leopold broke into a doggerel. He half spoke, half chanted it. He gave a sort of a whoop at the end of each line. When he had got through three or four lines the whole party, myself included, assisted him with

this whoop. His song was a great success, and after he had finished I went up and shook him by the hand. And then the postman came up and embraced him. It was a moment of triumph for Leopold. His skill as a histrion was only equalled by his skill as a cook.

Again he was in the centre of the floor doing a turn. This time he was playing his old part—the part of a French soldier. The legs of his trousers were rolled down, a hat was smartly set on the side of his head, and he held the kitchen broom at the shoulder arms. With the kitchen broom as a gun he executed in a most masterly manner the manual exercise of the French soldier. After the exercise he carried on an imaginary conversation with someone, which again created roars of laughter. I think the conversation was supposed to be between a soldier and an officer, for Leopold saluted with the kitchen broom at the beginning and at the end of it.

Here an incident occurred. My friend the postman picked up a glass and dashed it on the table. The pieces flew about the room, but no one seemed to mind. It seemed to be looked upon but as a discord that added to the general harmony—one of those discords that give piquancy and colour to a harmonious whole. I was surprised. I had expected to see a free fight. But no—things went smoothly along. And after his effort the postman took another

drink of wine, and got back again to his free, jovial, and careless self.

It was now well on in the evening, but the feast showed no sign of abating. All of them were waltzing and singing as they waltzed. There was Astræa waltzing with the postman. There was Joseph waltzing with the bridesmaid I had kissed. There was Leopold waltzing with the Maire's wife. All going round and round, having a good time. A gay, jolly party. I turned, and my eye caught the eye of the Maire. He was standing just behind me looking on at the dancers, holding his little daughter by the hand. His face was lit up with a smile, and he did not look at all as he had looked when I saw him on first coming into the inn. The spirit of merriment and gaiety had caught him and changed his expression.

I signed to him that I wanted to go and sleep, and he beckoned to me to follow him.

As we went up the old winding stairs of the inn we could still hear the dancers going round and round.

II.—AN OLD GASCON TOWN.

I.

THE next day I asked the Maire for my bill. I was feeling well and rested and my intention was to tramp on to Ax-Les-Thermes, a place eighteen kilomètres away from Hospitalet. It was in my mind to tramp up through the whole of France to Paris. But I was not quite sure about it. I had done so much tramping through Spain that it had begun to wear upon me. I did not mind the walking. It was the being alone and the not meeting with anyone who spoke English that bothered me. However, I would see how I felt as I went on. I would in any case have to tramp along till I got to the railway, which started up through France from Ax.

The Maire came with the bill, or rather with his announcement of the bill. He had been to consult his wife as to how much he should charge me. It was sixteen francs. I looked at the Maire as he made this startling announcement. The hungry expression of the morning before was in his face.

Sixteen francs! It was six francs too much at the very least. Across on the other side of the frontier, in Spain, I would only have been charged five pesetas for the same

accommodation—one day. The cooking, of course, in this French inn was better than the cooking in a Spanish posada. But ten francs should have made up even for this.

I intended to argue the matter out with the Maire—whose face now wore, as well as it was able, an expression of kindly politeness. With this end in view I looked round for Leopold to translate into French my unwillingness to be robbed. But I could not see him. And I remembered now that he had slipped out of the kitchen at the very moment that the Maire had come in to announce his demand. Perhaps he did not like to be around when I was being done.

The upshot of the business was that I had to pay the sixteen francs. Bargaining has its difficulties when one knows nothing of the language in which the bargaining has to be done. But I must say that I was vexed and that I showed it. I would sooner have thrown away twenty francs than have been done out of six.

After the Maire had carefully and slowly examined the money I had given him, to see that it was not Spanish, he became almost affectionate in his manner towards me. He shook me by the hand and gave vent to much voluble solicitude concerning my welfare on my journey to Paris. Though I did not understand French I could tell by instinct that his feelings towards me were of the kindliest character.

I then produced my passport and signed to him to put his official stamp upon it, so that people in after years would know that I had partaken of his hospitality. This he did without charge. And then in the kindest manner possible he strapped my knapsack up on to my back, shook hands with me once more, and I departed along down the road. I did not see Leopold. I was sorry.

What a beautiful road it was—a road curving and sloping down gradually through the mountains. It was a pleasure to step along it in the free, clear mountain air. Here was a kilomètre-stone. I went up to consult it. Paris was eight hundred and thirty kilomètres away up to the north—nearly six hundred miles. It was a long, long way to go. It would take me at least thirty days to tramp it.

After swinging along for something over an hour I came to a small village. Here I went to the inn and got a glass of wine and coffee with cognac in it for fifty centimes. The old woman who kept the place evidently thought that strangers and travellers were not specially sent into the world to be robbed. She charged me no more than she would have charged anyone else.

The inn in this village was exactly like a Spanish posada. The old woman herself looked like a Catalan. She was able to speak Spanish, and I asked her if she belonged to Catalonia. No—she was Gascon! But she had lived in Spain—in Seo de Urgel!

Ax. I was here at Ax-Les-Thermes after a walk of four hours through strangely beautiful mountain scenery. It was still the early afternoon. The town was quaint and strange and old and was filled with the sound of running waters.

I turned into the Hôtel Sicre which stood on the left side of the main road. Leopold had told me the day before to go there and mention his name and I would be treated well. He had been the cook of the hotel before he went to the inn at Hospitalet.

A little old lady came forward as I was taking my knapsack off in the porch. She was the proprietress of the hotel, and though she must have been over sixty years old she was still alert and quick in her movements. I managed to make her understand that I had been sent by Leopold and she was at once very friendly towards me.

She was rather an odd looking old lady, with a broad, red face and large blue eyes. She had about her the distinctive but indefinable look of race, and I found out afterwards that she belonged to an old Gascon family and that for the last six generations they had kept this hotel.

It was two hundred years old. In fact it had not the appearance of a hotel at all. It was rather like a big, strange country house —a place that might have been haunted by ghosts. The little old lady was like someone of the past showing me over a place of the

past. There was a great, long, wonderful room with a raftered roof. It seemed to answer at once for a drawing room and a dining room. There was in it a long table and off in a corner was a piano on the top of which were piles of music. The piano did not fit the atmosphere of the room, and at the same time it did not seem out of place. It was a modern note in the midst of old surroundings.

I shall always remember this room. Though the roof was low it still had the effect of great spaciousness. It must have been something in the structure of it that caused one to feel this. In a strange way it brought to my mind the council chamber in the Casa de la Valle in the Republic of Andorra—the council chamber wherein sat the cloaked diputados of the republic.

The old lady brought me to another room that led off from it and pointed to a picture that stood high up on the wall—a picture of a beautiful woman. A woman with a face of intelligence and charm It was one of the ancestors of the little old lady who was standing by me. I could gather this from what she was telling me. And also I could gather that this beautiful woman had lived during the time of the French Revolution. That vast, tremendous time. She had lived during the time of terror! But she showed nothing of the surrounding stress and terrible upheaval in her soft, blue eyes.

After that I went out to look through the town. Just off from the hotel there was a big square—almost like a plaza in a town of Spain. My attention was at once arrested by a group of statuary in it which represented a scene in early history. The group was over life-size, and was erected high up on a small terrace above the door of a public building. Columns in front of the door supported the terrace. In the centre just above the top of the columns was an inscription in French to the effect that Saint Uduat had vanquished Attila, the Master of the Earth (Maître de la Terre).

I stood and looked at it for a long time. Saint Uduat was standing in the foreground and was in the act of destroying the symbol of the power of the king of the Huns. The face of Uduat was at once noble and intellectual and destructive—the face of a grand, destroying angel. Behind him were the Huns whom he had vanquished. They were dressed in skins. This fine Uduat had routed the vast hordes of slaying men-wolves—these hordes of the night and darkness. Terrible-faced men who slew and passed on. It must have been that their shouts had rung through this old town of Ax. This town of the sound of running waters. But upon them had fallen Uduat. He drove them back into the darkness. Well might men call him a saint. He was a saint indeed. This group of statuary told the story of the struggle of light

against darkness. Uduat vanquishing Attila! A fine, wonderful story.

II.

THE charm of this old town. It came upon me as I sauntered around, listening to the sound of the waters. The air within it was as pure and clear as the air of the mountains that surrounded it. A beautiful place of trees and lanes and quaint houses. A gem-like, strange town.

It was getting dark, and I went back to the hotel, and there it was that I met Monsieur Bonfant. The little old lady introduced me to him. And the old lady's niece came in and I was presented to her. Her name was Marguerite Calvet du Sicre. She was young and she had dark hair and there was an expression in her eyes like to the expression in the eyes of the beautiful woman whose picture I had been shown—her ancestor who had lived in the time of the Revolution.

We all dined together in the long, wonderful room with the raftered roof. In the great, open fireplace logs were burning. The room was partly filled with the flicker and the shining of the flames. But in the far-away corners of the room shadows rested. The light from the logs was shining into a place of shadows. But they were shadows that had in them a softness and a sympathy. One felt that if from them there stepped the

ghosts of those that had dined in this wonderful room in the long ago, the ghosts would be welcome. They would wear smiling faces. One would not shrink from them. Nor be afraid.

The light from the fire fell upon the branching centre-piece which stood high on the table. Candles burned steadily in its silver sockets. The pure, still light from the candles and the waving, shining light from the flames of the logs mingled. The effect of the pure still light, and the waving light, and the shadows off in the corners of the room was very beautiful.

Before me sat Monsieur Bonfant. He was talking to Marguerite, the old lady's niece. I could not follow what was being said, but it was pleasant to listen to the sound of the voices. I seemed to listen as one would listen who was a long way off. As if I were outside the scene and the people.

There sat Monsieur Bonfant—a man with a kindly face. It was not that he was distinguished-looking or that he was out of the ordinary. But still there was something about him that one would remember—that one would like. He was a man of about fifty years old and the word perhaps that would describe him best of all would be kindly. Kindliness was in his voice and in his manner and in the expression of his face. A likable man. It does not follow that the people who are best worth knowing in the world are the people who are great or distinguished.

The wine that we had for dinner was a Burgundy. It came on to the table in bottles discoloured with age. It was a wine of a smooth, ripe flavour—old, ripened juice of the grape. How long it had lain in the cellars I don't know.

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What magic there is in an old bottle of red wine. How beautiful it looks as the light shines through it. An old bottle of red wine. For years it has lain in the darkness and rest of the cellar. For years there has been ripening within it a slow, soft life-warmth. A magical, fine spirit that for you will evoke dreams and half-dreams. This old bottle of wine holds imprisoned within it a kindly genie that will transport you back to the past. A past from which the bitterness has gone. For you this genie will soften the present. And he will show you the glimmer and the wonder of the future. An old bottle of red wine. It is a precious gift that comes from out the essence of the earth. A fine elixir. It cheers and befriends and soothes. It awakens in man his second and more potent self. It unweaves and unravels before him fine thoughts and strange and curious thoughts. It unlocks the mind's wonderful and mysterious recesses. It enriches and enripens the personality. Under its genial spell a man becomes gay, a man becomes wise with the profound wisdom of tolerance. He laughs, his wit sparkles, a

power new and strange is given unto him. He feels the glow of fraternity. He is brought within the circle of a beneficent, kindly magic. The care of yesterday is gone, the care of to-morrow has not yet come. The present is full of strange and beautiful colour. Wine! Give me an old bottle of red wine.

III.

THE music of "Carmen" is at once bizarre and human. It holds, it thrills, it enthralls. How strange it sounded now in this old, raftered room. Mdlle. Marguerite was playing the opening chorus of the opera—that fine human music that goes straight into the heart of life—that has in it the premonition of the tragedy to come. Monsieur Bonfant was standing near the girl as she played. The little old lady sat near the fire listening with the memory, perhaps, of her youth showing in her face. And the girl played on and on through the opera till she came to the duet that the soldier, José, sings with Carmen. And I sang the duet with her. Our voices blended and rang through the lights and the shadows of the raftered room.

One goes to the opera and one hears the world's most splendid singers and somehow the effect is not so great nor so pleasant to remember afterwards as the same music heard in a simple room without the show and the strong lights and the bravery of the stage.

To enjoy music there is everything in the mood of the listener. And, again, it is by no means the people with the great voices or the players with the great skill who are the most effective singers or players. Rarely are the players of the theatres artists, for in the theatre there is lacking the stimulating magic of the time and the mood. Indeed the modern theatre is but a place of strong lights and loudness and mechanism. It kills the art of the drama and the art of music by over-emphasis. And the singers and players therein degenerate into shouters and into puppets who over-speak and over-gesture.

IV.

THE next morning I was surprised by seeing Leopold. He had come in from Hospitalet, and he was going on to Tarascon, his native place. He was to start early the next day.

I asked him if he had left his place in Hospitalet, but he gave me to understand that he had not. He would be back there again in a few days. And then I asked him if he were going afoot to Tarascon, for in that case I would go with him. But, no. He was going to take the train from Ax.

I had intended to go away myself that morning, but as Leopold had come, it struck me that I might as well stay the day out with him. He was pleasant company—as a man

of varied experience invariably is. And again the charm of this old Gascon town was upon me. I would be sorry to leave it. It seemed to me that existence in it through all one's days would be a delightful thing.

Leopold at once took charge of the kitchen for the day. He put on his cook's cap and his apron and set to work. And then we talked together just as we had done in Hospitalet. I sat and smoked endless cigarettes whilst he bustled round.

After a while I went out to saunter again through the little town. As I was passing through the square someone called after me. I turned and there was the postman who had been the best man at the wedding in Hospitalet—the man who had invited me to kiss the bridesmaid and who had held her whilst I was responding to his invitation. We were glad to see each other, and we shook hands and endeavoured to talk together. But our efforts at conversation resulted in failure and in the end we adjourned to a café. We could not understand each other's words and so we had recourse to the freemasonry of conviviality.

My wanderings through the world have brought me to the conclusion that the strongest bond that can exist between men is that which is brought about through a similarity of temperament. Men may belong to the same race and country and still be natural enemies. Temperament is a mysterious thing that seems

to be little affected by race or by language, or even by ties of blood.

When I got back to the hotel I asked Leopold of the nature of the country between Ax and Toulouse. And he told me that between Ax and Tarascon there was a gradual descent and that between Tarascon and Toulouse I would pass over a great plain. From Ax to Tarascon was about twenty-five kilomètres and from Tarascon to Toulouse was perhaps another hundred. He reckoned the whole distance to be in the neighbourhood of a hundred and twenty-five kilomètres. A journey of four days. When I got to Tarascon I was to go to a certain hotel and mention his name just as I had done here in Ax and all would be well. He also told me of a place in Toulouse. But I could see from his manner that he was not so certain of it as he was of the place in Tarascon. Ah! the people of Tarascon were indeed a fine people! And he pressed me to journey with him there in the train on the morrow. He would look out for me and put me all right. It was a pity I could not stay in Tarascon, his native place!

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At nine the next morning I was ready to start on the road. Leopold had left for Tarascon three hours before.

I went and bade the little old lady goodbye. I did not see her niece or Monsieur Bonfant.

It seemed to me as if I had known the dear little old lady and her strange hotel for years. I was sorry to go. But I kissed her on the cheek and was gone with my knapsack on my back.

Now I was passing into the square and I stopped to take a last look at the group of statuary that represented Saint Uduat in the act of breaking the symbol of the power of Attila, the king of the Huns.

This old Gascon town. This quaint, beautiful place of strange houses and the sound of running waters. I wondered if I would ever see it again.

III.—FROM CABANES TO PARIS.

I MAY be wrong, but I think a knapsack on one's back almost helps one along in tramping the road. For the first day or so it is perhaps a little awkward and uncomfortable and the straps gall the shoulders. But soon this passes off, and the knapsack feels like a friend. If the rain is pelting down upon you it protects the back, which is of all places the worst to get wet. If you are going downhill it certainly helps you in the length and heft of your stride.

The weight of it is nothing—that is, providing it doesn't go over twenty pounds. All you have to do is to keep it well strapped up on your back and to jog merrily along. The knapsack is for you a friendly and kindly Old Man of the Sea. It helps your stride as you step comfortably forwards with your hands in your pockets. And it makes you feel independent. You can carry within it all that is necessary for your requirements. A knapsack is indeed a friend to a man who is tramping the road.

When I was between four and five kilomètres from Ax I heard a sound that I had not heard for some time. It was the quick, blurred puffs of a locomotive running at full speed. It fell sharply and suddenly on my ear as I was going along. Through the clear

air in the distance I could see a quickly extending line of smoke.

I felt as one would feel who was suddenly intruded upon. I had been listening to the distant, dreamy tinkle of cattle bells. And here was this aggressive, quick-running, smoke-belching thing the noise of which was becoming louder and louder. It drowned and overwhelmed all other sounds. It took the beauty and the poetry out of the landscape.

After I had walked for another kilomètre I saw something that killed me altogether. It was a notice that was stuck up at the head of a steep incline in the road. I stopped and gazed upon it and shivered. It was nothing more nor less than a warning to cyclists! They were to be careful that they did not break their necks in the negotiating of this incline. There on the board up above me was a warning to that effect in French.

This was too much, and I sat down on a stone by the side of the road and began to think. I was indeed getting into civilization! I was getting into the realms of the commonplace.

In dear old Spain the Spaniards would have taken pot-shots at the cyclists for presuming to spoil the landscape. But here in France the road was even defaced by warnings stuck up for their benefit. It was too much! Having to share the road with scorchers was more than I could bear.

For a while I pondered upon the meaning

and the philosophy of roads as I sat upon the stone. Surely roads had been built for men to walk upon, and horses to run and gallop upon, and carts and vehicles to rumble upon. The road-builders of the world had surely these ideas in their minds and they had built the roads in accordance with them. It had never occurred to them that human beings would go against the laws of nature and make weird exhibitions of themselves upon flying wheels.

I admitted, of course, to myself, that cyclists and motorists and the rest of the infernal, flying brigade had rights as all human beings have rights, but I found it difficult to admit that they had the right to run their weird machines upon roads that had never been intended for them. It seemed to me that they ought to build roads of their own.

How long I sat pondering I don't know, but all at once I stood up with a firm resolve fixed in my mind. I would not walk to Paris after all. I would take the train.

This warning to cyclists had been the last straw. Of course there were other reasons. But this reason was the keystone to the whole edifice of reasons.

I went along more slowly now. I intended to stop and wait for the train at Cabanes—a place eight or nine kilomètres from Tarascon.

I heard a cart coming along behind me and I turned to the side of the road and waited for it to pass. The driver turned round to

look at me, and as he did so an idea came to me. Why couldn't I ride with him in his cart to Cabanes? If I were going to stop walking I might as well stop at once.

I signed to him to stop, but he passed me without heeding the sign. He may have thought that I was a robber. I suppose I looked like one.

But he had hardly got more than seventy-five yards away from me when he drew up. And when I got up with the cart he beckoned to me to climb in and sit beside him. I shoved my knapsack under the seat and soon we were bowling along.

He was a stout man with a red face and the hoarsest voice I have ever heard. By the way of making myself agreeable I showed him the whip I carried for the keeping off of dogs and I told him in Spanish that I got it in Guadalajara in Spain. He took the whip and cracked it and then he made—in French—what I suppose must have been some polite comment upon its quality. I thanked him for his comment, whatever it was, and then the ice was broken. He began to talk to me. I could tell by the inflection of his voice that he was asking me questions. But that was all I could tell.

When he found that I did not understand what he was saying he raised his voice so as to give me a better chance. People often think that a man can understand a strange language if it be shouted out with sufficient

loudness. Evidently my friend was acting upon this principle. But even if he had spoken in English I don't think I could have understood a word of what he was saying. I have been to sea, and in my time have heard hoarse voices, but his was the worst fog-horn of a voice I ever met.

I was glad when we got to Cabanes, for he was most persevering in his efforts to make me understand his questions. In fact, his voice rasped on so that I was almost sorry I had asked him to give me a lift. But all things bad or good come at some time or another to an end and at last the cart was drawn up in front of a café in the main street.

Cabanes was much smaller than Ax. It was really only a place of one street. It wore a sleepy, un-alert air.

I invited my friend with the voice to come into the café to have a drink. He took kindly to the invitation, and we went in and sat down. He had an absinthe, and then he left me in the café and drove off again in his cart in the direction of Tarascon.

The landlord of the café gave me to understand that there would be a train from Cabanes to Toulouse in two hours and from Toulouse I could catch the express, which would land me in Paris the next morning at eleven o'clock. He was a stout, good-natured man, was the landlord, and he deputised a man who was in the café to look after me—a man who was going to Tarascon by the train which I was

taking to Toulouse. It took me some time to acquire this information, but in the end everything was managed satisfactorily through the medium of writing names and figures upon a sheet of paper.

A few minutes before the arrival of the train I got a third class ticket at the station under the guidance and general surveillance of my friend of the café. As I was getting the ticket the booking clerk asked me a question which was at once answered by my friend.

I found the French third class something like the English third class, the only difference being that in an English third class carriage you sit on what is alleged to be a cushion. In a French carriage you sit on an honest wooden seat.

Whilst we were running to Tarascon my friend put the rest of the people in the compartment in full and complete possession of my history from the time I had come to Cabanes in the cart to the present moment in the train. This was obvious by the way everyone in the compartment was looking at me as he talked. And also I could perceive that he was embroidering his account of me with touches of humour, for every now and then the whole lot of them would burst out into loud laughter, in which I joined though the joke was at once unknown to me and against me. My humorous friend, however, was a good sort, for just before we got to Tarascon he put me in charge of a young

fellow who was going on to Toulouse. When we got there this young fellow was to show me how and when and where to get my ticket. He was to stay by me and stand by me till I was safely aboard the Paris express. When we got to Tarascon my friend from the café shook me warmly by the hand and then got out on to the platform. But just before the train started again he came back to the door of the compartment, waved his hand to me, and again was guilty of some brilliant epigram at my expense. I could tell that it was brilliant and to the point by the hearty and enjoyable way in which everybody laughed. My friend of Tarascon was a good sort—a good sort, but humorous.

After he left things settled down somewhat. Evidently there was no one left behind who possessed his gift of humour. And after we had made four or five stops I found myself alone in the compartment with the young fellow who was to show me my way about when I got to Toulouse.

He was rather sallow and dark and had the appearance of a worker in some kind of a factory. I tried to ask him what he worked at, but I failed to make him understand. And then both of us relapsed into silence and quietude.

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There is something curious about the quick-travelling over long distances. If one walks, say, twenty miles in a day there is at the end of

the journey a sense of fatigue. The body is tired and wishes to rest. But the fatigue of a day's travel afoot is a different sensation altogether from the fatigue of a day's travel say in a quick-running train. You have made no exertion. You have simply sat and allowed yourself to be whirled along. And still at the end of the day you are tired, and tired in a more complete and thorough way than you would be after finishing a day's walk. It is not that your limbs are exhausted, it is that you are exhausted in the nerves and the mind. It is said that this exhaustion comes from the movement of the train and the unconscious endeavouring of the body to correct its effect upon it. But this can hardly have much to do with it. The real reason for the exhaustion must come from the mind. One has travelled perhaps three hundred miles and the sense or consciousness of the distance is impressed powerfully on the mind. It would take him twelve days or more to travel it of himself and here he has done it in one. Man has a distance-sense just as he has any other sense. It is really this sense or quality of the mind that suggests fatigue to him. Any man who has travelled much and who has at all thought of the matter knows this. It is this distance-sense that causes the feeling of nerve and mind exhaustion that comes to a man after he has completed a long journey in a train or even in a ship. This subtle form of exhaustion is never felt when a man is travelling of himself—

walking. For the distance-sense works then in absolute harmony with the body. And the exhaustion at the end of the day or journey is a physical and a healthy one.

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Toulouse. It was after eight o'clock at night, and the train had slackened speed and we were entering it. I looked curiously through the carriage windows into the famous town, but I could make out nothing save a confusion of lights and houses and streets and gaps of darkness and lights again. And the train made the curious, echoing under-sound that trains make when running slowly into large towns.

In a moment or two we had come to a stop in a big station and the young fellow—who had just wakened up from a half-doze—opened the door and beckoned to me to follow him. And in a second we were in the midst of a tremendous confusion of shouting and noise and hurrying. The station was filled with people who seemed to be going everywhere at once. It was well that I had someone to guide me, for I never could have got through by myself. I stuck to my guide like glue as he wedged himself through crowds and darted through this opening and that opening and down that passage and up this and across platforms and up and down flights of stairs.

At last I found myself standing in a long line, awaiting my turn to get my ticket for

Paris. How I got there I could hardly have told, but there I was with the young fellow sticking faithfully by my side. I pushed on with the rest, and soon I was getting my ticket from a tall, important person who wore a beard. It was a third class ticket and it cost me forty francs and, I think, twenty-five centimes.

Again I was rushing through the confusion of the station to what seemed to me the place from whence we started. We were stopped, however, at a barrier, or rather the young fellow was stopped. But he said something to the man who examined my ticket and he was allowed to come through with me. On we went along the platform and there was the train for Paris! Once aboard it I was safe. It ran right up through France to Paris without changing. I shoved my knapsack into the corner of a third class carriage and then stood back on the platform just in front of the door. And then it was that I began to breathe. The train would not start for ten minutes. There was time to smoke a cigarette.

I turned to thank the young fellow who had steered me through, but I could not see him. He had evidently passed back through the barrier as I was shoving my knapsack into the corner of the carriage.

I got in and took my seat. It was a carriage with five or six compartments knocked into one and there were a good many people in it. One of them—a young man with a

pale face and a small moustache and an overcoat—immediately took an interest in me. He was standing up in the next compartment to the one I was in and he had the general appearance and the cocksure air of the medical student.

"Ah!" he said, glancing at me critically, as the train was starting out of the station. "You—you are English—an Englishman."

It was nearly a couple of months since I had heard anyone speak English and I was glad. And moreover the young man spoke it with a good accent.

At once we got into conversation and I told him that I had come into France through the Pyrenees from Spain. He seemed interested and he asked me if the Pyrenees were difficult to get through at the present season of the year. I said they were—that snow was drifting upon the summit—and that I had lost my way.

And then his friendly tone towards me suddenly changed. He began to cast doubt as to the accuracy of my statement concerning the Pyrenees. He could go through them blindfold even at this season of the year—there was no snow—there was no danger. I was all wrong! And he went on to boast of what he could do and what I couldn't do.

I looked at him in astonishment. He was the sort of impudent young man who has never been a yard away from his mother's apron strings and who possesses the confidence

and cheek born of ignorance. I wondered what he could be driving at. It was in my mind to give him a box on the ear, but I had been warned that striking a man in France was almost a penal offence—especially if one were a foreigner. So I contented myself by telling him that I had no desire to talk to him, and I suggested to him in addition that possibly he was not quite so safe as he thought he was. This shut him up. My experience in life has shown me that it is always as well to meet aggression half-way.

After my passage at arms with the sharp young Frenchman I huddled myself up in the corner of the carriage and tried to compose myself for sleep. A long trying journey of fourteen hours was before me—and the night was cold. Had I known the ropes I could have hired a blanket and pillows in Toulouse for the journey to Paris. The charge for the use of them was trifling—fifty centimes, I believe. But my ignorance of French shut me out from this advantage.

I soon fell into a sort of half, restless doze. Of all positions I think sitting in a cramped space is the least favourable for sleep. If a man stands upright and still he will fall asleep more easily. It is certainly easier to fall asleep when leaning against a wall or a post. A man will fall asleep when he is walking—but this happens but rarely. I have tried many unusual ways of going to sleep during various times and circumstances of my life

and I must give the palm—as being the worst—to trying to sleep during a railway journey. There is the grinding whirring of the wheels beneath one, and the shaking, and the feeling of rushing in an enclosed, helpless way through space. And there is the gradual slackening of speed as one comes to a stopping place—and the dead stop that comes suddenly with a jerk—and the starting again and the working up to the sharp, short jolting of full speed.

It seemed to me now as if I had been on this train for years. To have always been enclosed in this quick-shaking, half-dark space. To have always been conscious of the presence of the man sitting opposite to me. I seemed to have known the man by my side through the whole of my life. I looked up to the roof of the carriage and there was the small light burning through the roundness of the thick glass. A small light burning with absolute steadiness in the midst of the whirring and the noise and the vibration and the shaking. Surely this light had been always burning. Surely I had always seen it. A small, steady light in the midst of noise and shaking.

Even when I slept the sense of the grinding monotony of the jolting and shaking was with me. I seemed to be carried along through space in a great, shaking, sounding iron ball. I seemed to belong to it—to be of it. I had always been in it—and always would be in it. A great, horrible, sounding ball of iron.

I woke up to find the train standing still.

What the name of the place was at which we had stopped I neither knew nor cared. I knew that we must be still a long way from Paris, for the daylight had not yet come.

I opened the door and stepped out on the platform. I was feeling cold and cramped. There was a group of people standing on the platform up near the engine and I went up towards them with the purpose of asking what the name of the town was. But before I got to them the bell rang and the train began to start and I had to run back to get my seat. The train, however, caught up to me and was beginning to pass me and I was forced to open the door of the first carriage that was handy and jump in. I would have to get out at the next stop to rejoin my knapsack.

There was just room for one in the compartment in which I found myself. In it was a party of young fellows and a girl. They were laughing and talking merrily and seemed to be having a good time. I was glad to have got in amongst them.

One of the young fellows knew a little English and soon we struck up a conversation. His manners and attitude towards me were friendly—altogether different from the sharp young know-all whom I had met in Toulouse. He told me that he and two of his companions were returning home to Paris after serving their time in the army. The girl was evidently a relation of one of them. She was good-looking —a girl with reddish gold hair and blue eyes.

Daylight began to break now, and soon I was able to see the kind of country through which we were running. It was flat and uninteresting—but well cultivated. As the daylight grew brighter I looked out into the distance for mountains. But there were none. There was nothing to relieve the drab, monotonous stretch of land.

At the next stop the train made I got out to go forward to my own compartment. I was sorry to have to go, for the voices and laughter of the young fellows and the girl with the reddish gold hair had cheered and livened me up.

I found my knapsack all right and again the train was hurrying and shaking along.

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We were coming now to the great and wonderful town. Running over a plain. Yonder in the distance was the Eiffel Tower. The light caught the top of it as it stood high up over Paris.

"Paree! Paree!"

Men were calling out the name as the train was stopping in the station. How beautiful and full of charm was the sound of the name. Paree! A word of strange and wonderful charm. The sound of it conveyed the beauty and the meaning and the wonder of the town.

My long journey was over. And I felt glad as I stepped out from the train and into the midst of the passing throng.

IN THE NORTH COUNTRY.

I.—OLD YORK.

WHICHEVER way you approach York you see the great tower of the Minster rising, dominating the old Roman-walled town with an historic effect and atmosphere, and giving out the power and the beauty and the sacredness of the past which still lives there. Approach afoot which way you will and there is the tower. And go on and on and enter the cathedral. This profound and glorious Minster of York. And you have entered into the magical splendour and glory of the past shrined in stone.

Shrined in stone.

Surely the men who conceived and built this place of wonder were men in the best sense. And they were even more. For this reverend and holy place pictures the mysteries and infinitude of God. The mystery of distance lies off before you even as the mystery of the distance of the stars. God was in the souls of the men who built this Minster. Let your eyes gaze upon the soft light that steals through the glorious windows—light in which hangs a celestial voice that at times may come to the one who kneels in this place of wonder in the silence of devotion. Gaze along the stupendous nave to the strange window

lying afar in the east. And kneel. Bow your head in reverence to this place, illimitable, profound, and holy. This stupendous place where lives God.

A place of light and immense distance and living, profound sound. For now the voice of the organ is rolling through nave and aisle and transept, through arch and along the far roof.

Voices arise.

Through the distance comes a voice at once clear and vague and sweet. A pure voice, penetrating and again strangely indefinite. A voice that comes forth and dissolves itself into the distance beyond. And other voices arise, and mingle with the rolling organ sounds, and fall and die away into silence.

Gone are the voices, and silence reigns, and dying light comes into the great Minster.

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Let us go along.

Here is the Lantern Tower on All Saints' Pavement, where in the times of old lights were placed to guide benighted travellers who were journeying into York. The forest of Galtres, which lay outside the town, was inhabited by robbers, who took toll from wanderers. These were the good old days when men robbed bravely, with arms in their hands, and took gamely their chance of dying on the gibbet. These forest robbers were stout,

hale, and hearty Yorkshire ruffians, who in the good old days helped materially to make an interesting town of old York. And surely all will agree with me in hoping that these manly lads made a full and fair shrift ere they went out to dance their last dance before the crowd. We have far worse robbers with us now—robbers who never even see the inside of a gaol.

How hearty and strong and hard of face are the men of this old York. Surely are they the right and proper descendants of the big-eating, heavy-drinking, swashbuckling Yorkshiremen who helped to put England in her place in the world. May this breed never die out! We want more of their like this day in England.

Here we are in Fossgate. And here is Trinity Hall, the home for centuries of the Merchant Adventurers. In times gone the merchants themselves used to go out in their ships to share the perils of their sailors from water and wind and pirate. They went out into strange and unknown parts as much on the search for change and adventure as for gold. And a small voice whispers to me that now and then they did a little piracy on their own—or, rather, they did a little buccaneering. It is just as well to put the matter politely as far as these good old lads of the past are concerned.

In a long room are pictures of the merchants. The men of the past look at one from

out the canvas. And their faces are in the main the faces of shrewd fighting men. They have the curious look of calm truculence of those who have it in them to resort at the ripe time to deeds of violence. Surely some of these men could have told some wild tales, for the sea was a hard place to sail in the days when they went out in their ships. The days of the Spanish Main. Here is the face of one who is said to be the Lucien Carew who went out to seek adventure with Sir Walter Raleigh. He seems to have been a young man with the reflective look of an artist. The face is full of curious reserve—as of one who could hold secrets. It does not look as though violence had lived within this Lucien Carew. But who is to tell? There are times when none may propound the riddle that the human face gives out.

Down under this Trinity Hall is the little chapel where the mariners came to get their ventures blessed. Here they came ere they went out over the vast, bleak waters. Of what manner of men were the sailors who crowded down into this chapel to listen to the invoking priest? What were the thoughts that came into their minds as they knelt here?

* * * * * *

This old wall of old York!

It was built to keep out marauders, and is at least as old as the Roman invasion. When the Romans came up the Ouse there

was a settlement of the Britons, where York now stands, and the Britons styled it Caer-efroc. And the Romans built a place here that they called Eboracum, the remains of which are to be seen to this very day. But the name York, likely enough, comes from the name Eurewic, which meant a town or village on a river.

I walked around on the top of the wall, and looked out over the surrounding plain to the Hambleton Hills, and again to the east to the Wolds, which broke up over the horizon. It was the morning of my second day in the old, fascinating town, and the sun was shining far out on the great plain, over which in times of old marauders came to break in upon the town. The same sun had glinted upon the arms of the approaching men of battle. And here in these bastions had stood the defenders of old York—stout, brave, well-hearted men, who watched through the day and through the night and who were here to give themselves for the welfare of the town. War was war then. And the day went—as it ought—to the bravest and strongest men. Man fought man. There was no crawling and slow waiting, and pitting of infernal machine against infernal machine. Modern war has grown to be a thing of damnable meanness. If men must fight, let them come out and show their faces like men instead of fighting with machines from behind rocks and from holes and burrows. Let them fight as fought these stout

Englishmen of the times of old. How many real and brave and gallant fights had been seen about and around this old York!

And yonder arose the great tower of the Minster that had risen through centuries of splendid labour-magic. Men had worked upon it from generation to generation, from century to century. Wars had come and wars had gone, but still this stupendous and wonderful house of God had risen stone upon stone, stone upon stone. The house of wonder and splendour and peace had grown in times of turbulence and turmoil and stress. And the wars and the strife had passed, and still the house of God tolled forth solemnly its bells. It stood—a place of beauty, strange and glorious and profound. A reverend and holy place expressing the mystery and infinitude of God.

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The ideals of men shrined in lasting stone.
This Minster of old York.

II.—THE QUAY SIDE.

THE quay side in Newcastle on Sunday morning is the hunting ground of the fakir and the quack and the omniscient racing tipster and all the rest of the people who have wits and the wit to make a living out of them. But don't let it be thought for a moment that these people are not honest. They are far more honest than ordinary tradespeople. They are worth their salt. They give of themselves and their magnetism to the working-class crowds who have come for centuries to the side of this river Tyne to be instructed and interested and amused. And they are well worth the pence that the crowds give them.

This quay side might be called the promenade and the place of expression of the working class of the high North. And to close it on Sunday morning would be an outrage against the liberty of the people who do the real work of England and who have at the very least as much right to amuse themselves as the people who are alleged to be their betters.

So let the quack and the fakir and the tipster live. They are labelled, and let it be stated here that not every man who gets his living in what is called a questionable way

is labelled. We have fakirs and quacks and tipsters and other like people who are not named with their proper names. They are less honest and more skilful and far more dangerous than their labelled brethren of the quay side.

Chadbands are talking about closing the quay side on Sunday morning. But the working people must not allow them to do so. And let it be remembered that it is the choking up of expression that has made Russia Russia. And let it also be remembered that it is the allowing of vent to expression that has made England what it is—the freest and most democratic and safest country in the whole wide world both for king and subject.

Let the quay side alone.

* * * * * *

I walked slowly down Pilgrim Street in Newcastle at something after eleven o'clock on this particular Sunday morning and here was the quay of the black Tyne with still ships ranged along it, and about and around and here and over yonder was a great crowd of people standing in groups and moving about here and there and talking and listening and laughing and generally enjoying themselves. Yonder up to the right was the great high level bridge. The air was heavy and humid and relaxing, for this quay side was down low. But that in no way affected the people.

A band of the Salvation Army was here

and one of them was exhorting the people who passed to mend their ways. But hardly anyone stopped to listen. Everyone was anxious to hear what the people had to say who were nearer to the earth.

A Cockney was auctioning off grapes at twopence and threepence and three halfpence a time, and here was a silent Italian standing by a stall laden with Parian marble ornaments. And close by was a quack telling his group something in—for me—the unintelligible Northumbrian dialect.

But I passed on to a tipster who was giving away sure and invaluable tips at the rate of sixpence for four handicaps. It seemed cheap and I spent sixpence upon his advice.

He was a Jew from London—from the Seven Dials. And, if he won't mind my saying so, he looked generally as if investing a little money on one of his own sure and invaluable tips would do him no harm. He was a weather beaten and storm tossed philanthropist who looked as if he needed a little money to oil the wheels of his innate philanthropy. But perhaps circumstances had so happened that he was without any money that morning. He was probably going to take advantage of the Golconda that lay within him, so to speak, after he had raked in sufficient sixpences.

He was one who was rich and fertile in expedients. He had most ingenious methods of watching and timing race horses in their trial gallops. He explained to us how he did

it most fully and frankly and generously, and I must say that his explanation alone was well worth sixpence, not to mention the four sure and invaluable tips that went along with it. He talked scornfully of tipsters who alleged that they were jockeys who had put their shoulders out riding and who were reduced to the getting of a living by the giving of tips that were neither sure nor invaluable. He himself was the only right and proper tipster breathing the breath of life! This London Jew from the Seven Dials was the best sixpennorth of entertainment in which I had ever invested.

A red-haired young man with one arm was standing on a cart further down the quay telling off the capitalists and the judges and the police and the politicians and all the rest of those whose lot it is to guide and govern England. He was an extremely clever and able young man and the crowd applauded his well-timed hits against vested and all other kinds of interests. He was a natural rebel and he defied all things on and over and under the earth. Occasionally someone in the crowd interrupted him, but he always got back on them crushingly. Indeed I fear that he knew more about the interruptions than the casual and interested observer might suppose. He had likely enough adopted that device of arranging interruptions that politicians of late have been rather overworking. However, he was a very interesting young man indeed, and

he gave full value for the money he made on the selling of the books he had with him in the cart. His method of introducing these books after his brilliant denunciatory harangue was art of the purest order. It was not that he wanted to make any money out of them. Oh no. He was merely selling them dirt cheap as a favour to the audience who had so kindly listened to him! And they went like hot cakes. I was much impressed by the magnetic eloquence of this orator of the quay side. He was one who would surely have adorned the front bench of the House of Commons. Why was he lost to Westminster? Ah—why? But the consoling reflection came to me that perhaps he was doing just as good work where he was—perhaps better.

And lo! and behold! I could hardly believe my eyes. There was a navvy in the field. He was actually here on the quay dealing out eloquence. He was selling leaflets containing "The wonderful adventures of Mr. O'Flynn in search of Mother Clifton." I felt that I had not come all the way to Newcastle to see this quay on Sunday morning in vain. To see a real live navvy earning his living by his wits was well worth the trouble of a long journey. In my unregenerate days I had indulged in navvying myself and the sight here of my colleague of the far times touched me. True he was somewhat aged—true he had a gamey and intelligent eye. But he was a navvy right enough. It was not his navvy

rig that I went by. It was his hands, and the unmistakable labour stoop in his shoulders, and the oak-powerful set of him generally that told the tale. A navvy who had in the end seen the error and unintelligence of his ways.

Truly was this quay side in Newcastle a wonderful place. And a significant place. A place that in reality expressed that curious and vital intellectual power that is brought to life in the depths and that will one day sway and reign.

III.—MAKERS OF SHIPS.

On the Tyne are built iron ships that go out to all parts of the world, that go out over the seas and oceans through great waves and storms bearing produce and merchandise and arms and men and munitions of war and people going to far places—ships bearing the hideous magic that makes sudden death, and ships bearing forth to distant, peaceful exchange the fruits of the labour of men.

These iron, water-conquering powers are evoked here on the Tyne—dark and strange—by grimy, blackened-faced men who have the look upon them as if they were gnomes who had come up from some under-world to ply their skill and their hammers. Great, broad-faced, labour-bent gnomes with patient, half-peering eyes who work through the days hammering and welding and riveting and lifting and cutting and putting into shape iron. Makers of ships. These gnomes are the makers of the ships that have conquered the world's mightiest element. Under the magic of their hands grow powers that were unconceived of even in the wildest imaginings of the men of old. For of what heft was the power of the sword of Siegfried when compared with the power of one of these wave-conquering

and wind-conquering iron ships? What genie told of in old Arab tales was so mighty as an iron war-monster that these patient gnomes with half-peering eyes evoked from out the still, dark earth-depths? Here on this dark, strange Tyne the dreams and conceptions of the past were more than realised. And think! Was not the genie or the power of old always a slave? Even so. And so are these patient men with the half-peering eyes, slaves. And is it to be then that the mighty and stupendous powers of the world shall be for ever contained within the labour of slaves. Alas, sometimes I think so. Slavery must exist as long as man has within him the desire for power. Slavery—power. One exists and rests upon the other. Even as the two sides of a coin.

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And so these makers of ships work through the hours of the day, and through the days of the week, and through the weeks of the year, and through the years of their lives. They work from father to son. Always working. Always in the midst of the ringing, sounding iron. Seeing the ships grow and grow and grow. Watching the budding and the coming and the ripening and the fulfilment of the power. Seeing into the very essence and the core of the mystery of the magic. And who is to say that there may not be in their lives some compensation that the man who believes in the hurtle and change of Revolution

dreams not of? Revolution and terror will come, but may there not be in this present slavery some strange, fine gleam of gold?

For there is something restful in the expression of these blackened-faced, labour-bent makers of ships. They are not as the men I have seen in the tramping along the roads. Nor are they as the men I have seen in long journeyings in ships. Nor as men in far, out-of-the-way places. Nor as men of wealth, nor men of strife. Their faces are restful and calm, and in them is a power that I have not seen in the faces of other men. A controlled, steady, restful power. Something secret and strange that may be of the essence of the power that they evoke here from their hands by the side of the strange, dark Tyne.

Furnaces roar and belch out mighty flame and from out them iron issues splendid and terrible and glowing—gripped in the grip of these men—and it is struck and crunched and pressed and kneaded and welded into shape. Here is falling a mighty hammer and men twist and turn the iron, glowing and terrible, and sparks shower forth and steam hisses. And yonder, iron is crunching through a mighty and curious device of slots and wheels and rollers and frames of a power enormous. Here a crane is lifting mighty masses of iron. And yonder a man is hammering by himself. Yonder in the slips is laid the keel of an immense ship.

The sounds of the shipyard. The small hammers ring clearly as they fall on the set,

hard metal, and the great hammers sound quick and dull and thunderous as they fall on the hot, soft metal, and there is a distant, strange whirring and a dull, heavy clamping and falling, and a piercing, steady sound of cutting, and far-off sounds that one does not understand, and sounds that clash and disaccord, and curious, deep under-sounds. The sounds of a conflict. The makers of ships are bending the iron to their will. They are fighting the battle of power. And the iron that has been dragged forth from the still, dark earth-depths cries out in pain.

It had slept in peace in the earth through a lapse of time inconceivable, and in the end it was dragged up and was now being crushed and beaten into subjection by the makers of ships. It resisted and fought and cried out, but the makers of ships heeded it not.

They went on.

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I was in a shipyard near to Sunderland.

And up overhead rose the gantry—an immense, high, myriad-limbed trestle that rose up out of and enclosed the great open-air workshop. And from the top of the gantry—a hundred feet up in the air—ran trolleys from which pended chains and clamps to grip great plates and pieces of iron weighing tons upon tons. And these great pieces of iron were carried through the mid-air and lowered to the place where wanted. Seen from miles

away this gantry stood as a myriad of parallel hair lines against the horizon.

Only men who had been sailors worked up here in the trolleys that flew through the mid-air with their great burdens of iron. For men who had not been broken to the working up aloft would lose their nerve. The work up on the top of this myriad-limbed gantry belonged to the men whose nerves had been hardened by the fighting with flapping sails on foot-ropes and yards high up between clouds and sea.

I climbed up on to the top of the gantry and entered into the square box-like trolley and at a touch from the lever we were shot out along the overhead iron beam. And the nerve for the moment left me. For the effect of being suspended up here in mid-air was not as the effect of being up in the air on the swinging foot-ropes of the yards of a ship. If one fell or lost grip aboard a ship there would be a chance of gripping something in falling. But here one was enclosed and falling would mean falling into the jaws of absolute death. There were many precautions, but how if the overhead beam itself smashed ?

I felt afraid, and my heart beat faster.

Down, down beneath me was the great spreading workshop and off beyond ships were in the river. Smoke dimmed the line of the horizon. I was suspended strangely up above some gnome world.

And up through the air came the sounds

from the hammers of the makers of ships. I could see these patient gnomes evoking mighty, iron power-beings through the magic of their hands.

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And the sounds from their hammers rang out as a wonderful and mysterious song.

IV.—BLAYDON TO SHIELDS.

I SET out to walk between Blaydon and Shields and when I got to Scotswood Bridge I saw a man sitting in a somewhat dejected heap near to the entrance of it. It was plain to the eye that something was wrong with him. And I knew well what this something was, for I had been in a like plight myself. He was unable to pay the penny toll that the hard hearted bridge keeper exacted for the crossing over the Tyne, and he was waiting for some charitable and free and easy person to come along and pay it for him—even as I in tramping times of old had waited at toll bridges in America.

I looked at him and he looked at me, and I beckoned and we trudged together over the Tyne. He told me that he had had thoughts of leaving his cap as hostage with the toll keeper whilst he went into Scotswood to forage for the penny, but the raven—in the person of myself—had turned up, and all was well. He knew a man who worked in Scotswood from whom he could borrow a shilling—that is, if the man had it! And armed with this he would go forth to conquer the world and fate. He was like a good many more of us.

I may say here that it was only with the greatest difficulty that I could follow the purport of his yarn, for he spoke in the Northumbrian language. And here I must really say something that I don't like to say. The Northumbrians are the finest and the best and the heartiest and the handsomest people in the world—but why don't they speak English? Or—well I take that back. I don't want to offend such likable people. So I put it like this: Why don't the English people learn the Northumbrian language? Something should be done one way or the other. There should be but one language in a country—that is for the natives of it. Either England is wrong or Northumberland is wrong. And as far as I am concerned all I can say is that the men of Northumberland are so genial and friendly and the women are so handsome that I personally am in favour of the English generally mastering the deep secrets of the Northumbrian language.

After crossing the bridge the impecunious Northumbrian and I went down to the edge of the river to see some fishermen hauling in their nets. It was the first time I had ever had the fortune to see salmon fishing next door to a great iron works.

Here was Joe Foster hauling in his net. He was a bewhiskered old man with a most cute and experienced face. A policeman who was standing by—and who fortunately for me had some acquaintance with the English lan-

guage—told me that Joe was a wonderful character. And I must say that he looked a wonderful character. He had won two Sheffield Handicaps in the days when a Sheffield Handicap was a Sheffield Handicap. This English-speaking policeman was a great admirer of his.

Joe hauled in a struggling and flapping sixteen-pound salmon and killed it with a blow on the head from a thick, baton-shaped piece of wood which he called a "baffolick." That was as near as I could get to the sound of his name for it, when the policeman—at my request—asked him what he called it.

And then I passed on my way towards Elswick after bidding farewell to the impecunious Northumbrian.

I soon found, however, that I would have to walk the whole of the way to Newcastle upon a hard, street pavement—the worst thing in the world to walk upon—and as soon as I came to the first tram I took it. And then the thought came to me that in this way I would hardly get the view I wanted of the Tyne and its life, for the bank of the river had now degenerated into a most unpicturesque street and often as not I was shut out by great ironworks from a view even of the ships that lay in it.

When I got to Newcastle I went down to the quay and took the boat going to South Shields.

After getting some way from Newcastle

the river widened out. It had now width and great volume and a workman on the boat pointed to a place where the people put out hooks for the salmon in the season. It was an illegal way of getting the fish, but it had evidently the charm for the Tynesiders that all such ways will have as long as man is man. There was a difficulty, however, of selling the fish when caught, for no one was allowed to sell to the dealers without they had a licence. Of course, the dealers lost nothing by this. They would not be tradespeople if they did. Their method was to give the poacher about a third of the value for the salmon—which the poacher was forced to take. If the poacher did not take what the trades-person offered as likely as not the police in some mysterious manner would get to know of his depredations. Who would not be a fishmonger on the side of the Tyne in the salmon season!

The workman confided to me the fact that he cared nothing at all for salmon. I suppose he had eaten so much of it that the flavour had palled upon him. And I gathered from his manner and from himself generally that he was what might be called a keen sportsman under the rose.

We stopped at many landing stages for people to get on and off the boat. It was now six o'clock in the evening and the work-people were using the river boats to get home.

Here came into view an immense shipyard. The sound had all but died out from it.

It had a deserted and desolate look out here on the river that was widening and widening and getting deeper and deeper in volume. In the shipyard was the hulk of an immense vessel that was being slowly built to go out over the great ocean. And over on the other side of the broadening river were shipyards and before us and behind us in the distance were shipyards. But no sounds of hammers came out over the waters. Silent, deserted places by the stretching, sweeping river.

Here was a mighty, gray warship. And some sailors who were standing in its waist waved their hands to us as we passed. And we passed by an immense full-rigged ship that lay, with bare masts and yards, moored to a great red buoy.

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Here the river was full of great buoys to which ships of all kinds were moored. It was now a river of a great width filled with moored ships and moving ships and ships coming in the distance where the width was still greater. We were on the threshold of the wide moving sea and the river was now beginning to have in it the restlessness and sense of volume of this sea that lay just outside. And over yonder was looming South Shields. And there was now the sound of the sea in the river. And the full, great, steady wind of the sea. The air was full of the fresh, clean, salt smell. And out through a stretch came

the sight of the great moving, heaving width itself. Sails, small through the distance, stood upon it. The closing day was clear, and red sunlight stretched out upon the water far out to the open sea.

Here was Shields.

V.—ON TO LIVERPOOL.

I.

I FOUND myself sailing on the top of a tram which was going along Deansgate. And the tram turned to the right into Liverpool Road. In the distance down the road arose the great, high, circular frames of gas works. The day was splendid. The dark cotton town was shining in the light.

We had crossed the slow-moving Irwell and we were in the royal and dark borough of Salford. And here was Eccles New Road.

And suddenly I felt that I could breathe. The air had become fresh. I was out of the foul, clouded, smoky air of Manchester.

I was to walk from Manchester to Liverpool, and I was taking the tram out as far as it would go, for tramping along the flags of a great city is a thing to be avoided. There is no give to the foot as one steps along the flags.

Here was Eccles—a place beautiful and green and fresh. A place of delightful, clear air. And yonder was "Ye Olde Thatche" —the old shop where the delightful Eccles cakes—the cakes of my youth—were first made. It was a very old shop indeed. It had braved the battle and the breeze for 811

years. At least the inscription upon it so asserted. A dear old Eccles lady who kept a shop a little way off confided to me, however, the news that the shop was not quite so old as the people said it was, and moreover that it was not the original Eccles cake shop at all. It was another shop in the town that had that distinction and honour! Whatever be the merits of the case, all I can say is that "Ye Olde Thatche" was one of the oldest looking places I had ever laid eyes on, and I would not have been surprised had they dated it from the Flood. It looked the part, and to look the part is one of the chief things in history and in life. As to whether or not it was the place where the delightful and delicious Eccles cakes were first made I leave that to the residents to thrash out amongst themselves.

I crossed the market place to see the stone column that had been there since IIII—the Old Eccles Cross. It was a dark weather worn stone to which bulls had probably been chained in bull baiting days. At least this was what the dear old Eccles lady who kept the shop told me. And then I went to the old church —also dating from IIII. It was a strange old place built by people who had the feeling for religion within them. Such places are not built now. A calm, holy, reverend, beautiful place.

I walked round it and I stopped at the place where the Gospels were read. There was the eagle with spread wings and raised, threaten-

ing beak bearing upon its back the Gospels. The organ was playing, and I asked a man who was listening near it, and who was evidently one of the choir, if he knew the significance of the symbol of the threatening eagle bearing the Gospels. He told me that the eagle carried the light through the world. That the eagle meant strength and swiftness and piercing vision and wisdom. But it occurred to me as I stood in the strange old church that there was a deeper meaning than this in the symbol, for symbols contain within themselves the innermost essence of the meaning they represent.

Surely this threatening symbol meant that the Light was to be spread through the world by force—by the edge of the sword.

For so up to this time had the Light been spread.

II.

I WAS at Peel Green, six miles from Manchester. Warrington was twelve miles away, and I intended to stop there that night.

It was a wonderful, blazing day. I was wearing a cap and so got the full scorch and sear of the sun upon my face. I ought to have worn a broad-brimmed hat.

It seemed to me to be almost as hot as it would be in the south of Spain, but I walked sharply along till I began to perspire. When one perspires the sun loses its power to hurt. Then it is that the sun becomes beneficent

and puts life and power into a man. To walk in the blaze of the sun, with the head properly protected, is to get added length of life. For the sun is life. A sun-bath is past all the baths that the wit of man can devise.

When I was six miles from Warrington I fell in with two tramps. They were going my way, and we began talking. Both had been soldiers—good, handy looking men who were homeless.

We came up with a man who was sitting by the roadside with his face buried in his hands. He looked ragged and tired and weary and as if the heat of the sun had got a little ahead of him.

"Which way are you going?" I asked.

"Both ways," said the man, without raising his head.

The man had put the philosophy of his circumstances into the shortest sentence. There was wit and truth and pith in his answer.

"Come on, then," I said.

But he did not stir. He had become indifferent even to companionship.

"Come on and have a drink," I said, again.

And he slowly got up.

He was a shrewd-looking, tired man with cynical eyes set deep in his head. He turned out to be an Irishman who hailed from Clonmel. He, too, had been in the army.

We went into the first inn we came to along the road and I ordered pints of beer and bread and cheese for the lot of us. The two men

whom I had met first had eaten nothing that day. The Irishman did not say when he had eaten last.

And then a man who was hawking vegetables around in a cart chummed in with us. He also had been in the army, and he provided onions from his cart for our feast—for which he would take nothing. This hawker was a good sort.

He had served under Methuen in the Boer War, and he told us how he had been three days without food at Modder River. And so we talked along as we polished off the beer and the bread and onions and cheese.

And then I found myself again on the road—this time, alone. I had left the tramps who had been soldiers talking together in the inn.

They had done the work of their country and their reward was that they were outcasts upon the road. Of course, there was a good reason I suppose for their being outcasts just as there is a good reason for everything. But good reasons for misfortunes don't make the misfortunes any easier to bear. And it seemed to me that these soldiers had been badly used.

In fact, soldiers are very badly used in England. They are looked down upon and often insulted by the people whose battles they have to fight. The truth of the matter is that the middle and the trading class of England shirk their plain duty to their country.

Every man in England should be ready and willing to fight in the defence of his country. If he is not willing to do this, he does not deserve to be allowed to live in the country.

Every man in England should be trained and broken into the use of arms so that he might be a good and a true man when his country was in danger. He would then learn not to despise the soldier—and he would be able to do his duty when the time comes.

I thought of this as I stepped along the road to Warrington.

VI.—THE GRAND CANAL.

I.

THE day was terribly hot and I got badly burned through the wearing of only a cap. I met a good many men going and coming along the road.

I passed through Cadishead and finally the town of Warrington hove into sight. It was not a town that made a dark cloud in the air, as did most of the Lancashire towns.

A tram came out along the road about a mile out from the town and I boarded it gladly. The eleven miles' walk in the glare of the sun had tired me a bit.

Warrington is a picturesque, clear-aired, pleasant town, and it owns a policeman who possesses wit. For when I asked him as to where I should put up and where the best place was to get a meal, he regaled me with many humorous impressions concerning myself. Amongst other things he told me was that I must have been a pugilist. He had had a great deal to do with pugilists, he said, and he thought that if I trained down a bit I would be all right.

He was a stout block of a man with an egotistical voice, and he went on to give me his views of life generally as he stood at the

crossing regulating the traffic of the main street of Warrington. I gave him a cigar and passed on to get the benefit of his expert advice as to the town.

That night I went to the theatre where the most lurid kind of a melodrama was being played. But the somewhat vivid charm of the piece was not strong enough to keep me awake. The day had tired me.

The next morning I was up bright and early to start along the road to Liverpool. But it occurred to me that it would be a good idea to go to Latchford Locks to see the ship canal.

Here were the locks. And the wonderful canal was stretching for miles under the light of the sun. And then it occurred to me that it would be a good idea to walk along its banks to Liverpool.

As I was looking round the immense locks a coasting steam schooner of over a hundred tons entered from the higher level. She was on her way from Manchester to Liverpool and was called the "Bedlormie" — and before I knew where I was, Captain Waring, the superintendent of the locks, spoke to her captain and I was aboard. Going down the canal on a vessel was the best way of all to see it. And I settled myself comfortably on a plank seat on the bridge with the captain. All thoughts of walking had now vanished. I would glide easily and quietly and lazily to Liverpool.

Or rather to Eastham. For the canal

ended at Eastham on the Mersey, twenty and a half miles away. There were no more locks to descend. The great canal was now on a level with the mouth of the Mersey and with the far ocean.

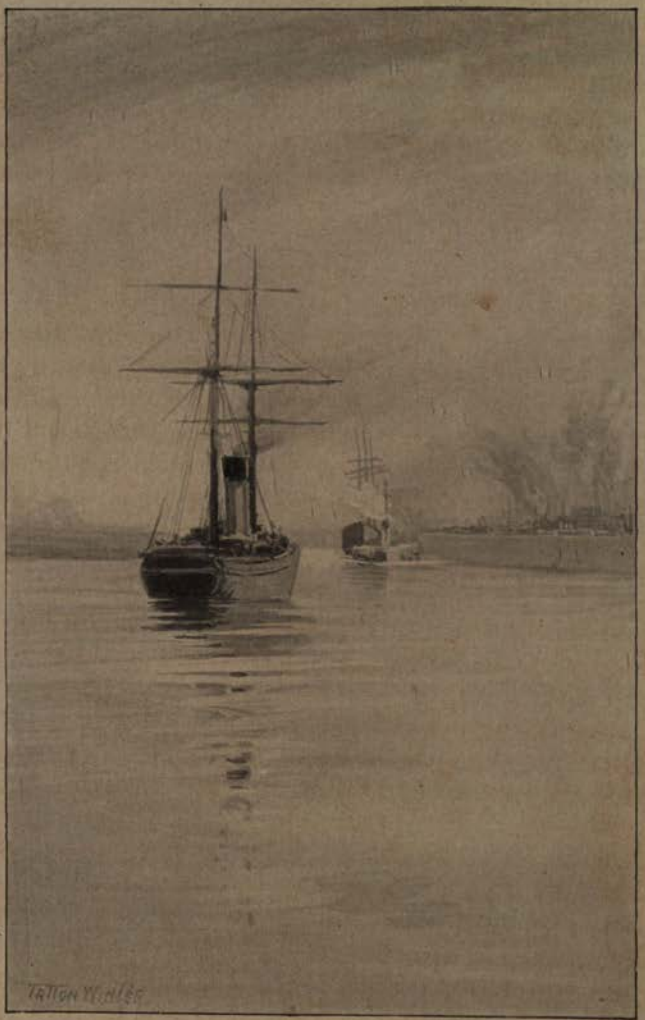
II.

Of all the ways of travelling, travelling by canal is the easiest and the safest and the most beautiful. There is neither jar nor rock nor any sense of untoward motion. You glide easily and serenely along. The country passes before you with the soft ease of a dream. You are at once going and you are still and at rest. It is motion in stillness. The world passes before your eyes with a slow and serene and strange enchantment. The boat moves as move the clouds. You go along as in a dream. You have time to think upon the things you see. They calmly pass before you in their fulness and their roundness. You see the beginning and the middle and the end of them. You are under the spell of the softest and gentlest and most perfect mood of that wondrous all-god, Motion. And you sail calmly along in still quietude. And fields slowly arise, and reveal themselves in full, and pass. And the grasses and the trees and the flowers softly and slowly reveal themselves. And towns slowly arise above the banks in the distance. The sounds that come are as soft sounds in stillness. How enthralling and strange and soft and quiet it all is. And the journey is at

an end. And it is still as if you were at the beginning. A sense of rest is with you. The journey has been as the soft passing of a cloud. There is not even the faintest sense of a strain upon you. A picture has passed before you. That is all.

III.

WIDNES appeared. It rose slowly up in the north-west. A dark, dreadful picture in the midst of the splendid, wonderful day. An infernal place of belching, poisoning fumes where people were being slowly murdered in the name of science and the name of greed. The snakish, poisonous, murder-fumes wreathed and slimed slowly upwards, defiling and degrading the brightness. This poisonous hell-town rose up in the north-west. Yonder, from the vast chimneys, arose monstrous snakes more deadly than the snake-monsters of the dim and long gone past. Truly, life and the world changed but little. Man had evolved in the midst of the horror of a reptile environment. And the snake-monsters of the long-gone past were gone. But man had evoked them again here in this Widnes. In the old times the sliming immense monsters but slew man. But these monsters arising before me slew even the grass and the trees. They arose and spumed, defiling and degrading the brightness of the splendid day. These horrid spawn of the lust of greed and the foolish, burrowing blind thing of egotism that man calls Science.



THE GRAND CANAL.

Better would it have been if this Widnes —this poisonous hell-town—were blotted out. Science! what have you done for man save degrade him and take away from him his innate and native power?

IV.

THE horn of the "Bedlormie" blew and the swing-bridges softly swung open as if by magic to let us pass. And the dark, dread blot faded away. And here were fresh and green fields.

The wonderful suspension bridge of Runcorn! It appeared—a structure of delicate and interlacing lines that seemed to rest of itself in the bright, summer air. And we went on till we could see off from us the faint yellow waters of the Mersey. It ran in a line with the still waters of the grand and wonderful canal.

Here to the south-east was the River Weaver. The canal seemed now to lie in the midst of moving waters. And off before us was the widening mouth of the River Mersey.

Before us a great and mighty vessel moved slowly along the canal. We had come upon her in our journey. We could see the men standing upon her deck. She had come from a part of the world far distant, and again she was out-bound. An immense stupendous vessel going slowly.

And here was Eastham. Here was the beginning of the great canal.

And yonder over the broad width of the river was the town of Liverpool.

VII.—IN WIGAN.

If you tell people in Manchester that you are going to see what Wigan is like, they are apt to stare at you and slightly shake their heads. It is as if you were going to explore some weird aboriginal place. You are leaving the brightness of civilization to plunge into the outer darkness of barbarism. Manchester is hardly a bright place, but the people feel that it is—compared to Wigan. In fact, you hear so much concerning the general primitiveness and savagery and out-of-dateness of Wigan that your desire to see the place changes into a positive longing. It may be that there is some new type of man there, or that the inhabitants still stain themselves with woad, or that cannibalism still exists in that curiously named town. And you journey towards it filled with the explorer's hope of seeing something astonishing. Of course you go armed.

You pass through miles of dull, smoke discoloured country and the explorer's hope that is within you rises with each mile. Surely the place you are going to visit must be something awful. And you become as excited as the heavy, dull air that gets into the train will allow. You are on the threshold of strange adventure.

Here is Wigan!

You get warily out of the train, you eye the man still more warily as you give up your ticket, and you climb the steps leading into the street after the cautious manner of a scout stealing into an enemy's town.

You are in the street. You look around with two eyes at once. You see a man actually pass by in a top hat.

* * * * * *

Alas, Wigan turns out after all to be but a respectable, manufacturing town. Gone are the glorious old days when men killed each other merely to gratify a certain sense of humour. Gone are the glorious old days when men fought together with their hands and feet in the streets and on the crofts merely for pleasant exercise. Gone are the valiant fighters of the police. Gone are the Sundays —the Sundays that were simply orgies of drinking and fighting. In fact, Wigan has sunk so far behind her ancient fame that the Rulers of the town are thinking seriously of lowering the wages of the chief constable. There is nothing for him to do. He and his men are growing stout and unwieldy through lack of exercise. His chief employment at present is the piloting of peaceful processions through Wigan at Whitsuntide.

I have no idea as to who is responsible for Wigan's sad lapse into the decay of dull respectability. If, however, it be the chief constable who has dragooned them into this

deplorable state, his wages ought at once to be lowered and a leather medal presented to him. But it may not be altogether his fault. It may be that there is in the corporate body of Wigan some basely respectable strain.

* * * * * *

However, it is only fair to state that there still exists here and there in Wigan some traces of her glorious and vigorous past.

I chanced to wander into Scholes—a part of Wigan where the houses are centuries of years old. I picked my way carefully over the old cobblestones till I came abreast of a public house from whence were issuing sounds of jovial merriment. It was Saturday afternoon, and I went into the public bar full of the hope of seeing something worth seeing.

The bar was full of colliers with blackened faces. They were steadily and quickly doing away with gallons of ale, and they were discussing various things with vigour and point. Their language is impossible to reproduce. But it is enough to say that it was full, fine, forceful, and colourful. You would know what they meant even if you were one who were accustomed but to the pale, effete English of the people who are educated. It was good, old, unadulterated root Saxon.

I stood in a corner of the public bar, enthralled. Indeed, so fascinated was I by the scene that I forgot to drink the glass of bitter that I had ordered, not from a fair barmaid,

but from a powerful, hard-faced man who was manifestly of the chucker-out persuasion. I had fallen upon a Wigan that was something like the glorious Wigan of old. Here was a Wigan upon which the blight of a peaceful respectability had not fallen. Here was a forceful, fist-and-clog-fighting Wigan. As yet they were only in the peaceful if noisy stage. But I hoped.

And my hopes were realized.

For at once—without a moment's warning—two of the men began to wrestle in the bar. "Wrostle," they call it.

I have seen a few rough things in my time. I have seen the Harvard and Yale students play their man-killing game of football in America. I have seen rough affairs in the far West. But never have I seen the equal of that extempore "wrostlin" match.

They were men near to eleven stone apiece. And they were in that finest kind of condition—the condition that comes from hard work. They fought like tigers. Of the two this "wrostlin" was really worse and more dangerous than actual fighting. One man gripped another man around and under the shoulders and swung him full through the air. The other men in the bar cleared to either side so as to give them room. I pressed forward to see all that was going on and was kicked in the ribs with the clogs of the swinging man. But that was a mere detail. The man who had been swung in the air was down now almost on the flat of

his back on the floor. But somehow or another he arched up his body and managed to throw the man who was on the top of him to one side. In a flash he was on the top of him in turn and pressing him to the floor. I was afraid that he would crack the man's neck. His head had somehow got under his shoulder. But, no. These colliers were made of iron. He managed to get out of his difficult position. And both men turned and mixed up and fought furiously on the floor. In time one of them won. But I was unable to tell which. Their movements had been so quick and furious that I lost my eye-grip of them.

It struck me as I walked slowly through Scholes, after leaving the public house, that the people who were dragooning Wigan into respectability were making a big mistake. The ultra-respectable nations have invariably been beaten in warfare. War is no kid-glove affair. And the nation that wins a war in the end is the nation that is possessed of the greater number of hard, obstinate, truculent men. These rough, brutal—if you like—Wigan colliers were a valuable asset to the might of England. It was a pity that England had not more men like them. And another thing struck me. When England loses her healthy, hard barbarism, and becomes weakened with the subtle poison of culture, down she will go.

England needs a few more towns like Wigan —or rather, she needs a few more towns like the Wigan of the old, fighting, truculent days.

TRAMPING THE BLACK COUNTRY.

I.—FROM STOKE TO STONE.

I.

I STARTED from Stoke on a Tuesday morning to walk to Wolverhampton which lay thirty-one miles dead to the south. The charm which hangs over the Potteries had lost its grasp upon me and I was striding out towards the fresh country air. I had found the study of the beautiful art of the English potter most interesting, but the smoke and the dust and the all-pervading smell of clay had towards the end slightly chastened my enthusiasm. And I longed for the sight of fresh green fields and the inhaling of fresh air.

I was soon consulting a sign-post which stood at the end of the road that had led me from the town. Another road cut across it at right angles. It was a good even road, and the very sight of it made one long to walk upon it. I took it as it ran southward in the direction of Stone and Stafford and Wolverhampton.

II.

I WAS now well into the freshness and clearness of the country. Through the distance to my left I could see the smoke reeking and curling up from the obese, champagne-bottle-

shaped chimneys of Stoke. Away to my right and off in front of me undulated as beautiful a country scene as any in England. And the River Trent wound along with the road. As I walked I could just make out its low, deep, soft sound as it ran along. And far ahead of me I could see it circling and winding and shining.

In one way the country in England is the most beautiful in the world. It is quiet and restful and charms the eye with a perfect blending of soft shades. Soft green is the dominant note of this blend of colour shades—the soft, wonderful green of the grass of England. And so the eye and the senses are quieted and rested. And one walks along in the midst of the charm of a quietude.

III.

THE song of a lark was ringing out through the quietude. I stopped and listened. The lark was soaring up far above, beyond the ken of the eye. But the strange glorious, joyous, ringing notes came down and spread out and around. Exulting, wonderful notes. There was in them the joy of the morning. And there was in them the joy of light and of life. Clear, thrilling notes woven from sunshine. They rang and rang and rang. To listen to them filled one with new and strange emotions. It was as if one were listening to a voice coming from out the heart of life.

Filling this soft, green quietude was an uplifting, wonderful song.

A song that rang out of the heavens.

IV.

I WALKED along till I came in sight of a great hall which lay off from the road to the right. I turned up towards it. It was a fine, big, spacious residence, and it stood in a beautiful park. The great gate, which led to the chief entrance of the hall, was formed of long bars of iron that were in places crossed and laced in a curious and artistic manner. Seen from a distance the effect of this gate was most curious and striking. As a rule great gates express power and secrecy and sullenness. But this gate at once expressed delicacy and strength. Rarely have I seen a gate so beautiful.

No one seemed to be in the great hall. There was about it an air of lifelessness and solitude. It was a great house surrounded by grounds and woods. No one seemed to be living in it.

It was fine to swing along through this wide and beautiful park which belonged to the house where no one seemed to live. It made one feel that life was, after all, a fine thing. These grounds were so still and spacious and beautiful. The country through which I had passed in coming from Stoke had charm, but it was as nothing compared to the charm of this park. The very trees within it looked

nobler of aspect. There was about them a serenity and a peace and a grand largeness of air. They looked as trees look that are not pressed and crowded in the struggle for the light of the sun.

And then I passed from the park into a wood. The wood formed part of the grounds that belonged to and encircled the great hall, and it had the charm and the beauty and the serenity of the park through which I had just passed. The trees in it were mainly oak and beech, and off to the left through the foliage I could again see the Trent winding along. The light of the sun was now falling full on the face of the river, and it was shining as would shine a winding path of silver.

An old bent man was working in the wood. He was digging a post-hole. I was struck by his face as he raised himself to bid me the time of day. It was the dull, heavy, drawn face of an old man who through the whole of his years and the whole of his life had earned the bread he ate by the doing of the hardest kind of labour. He was working here in the beautiful grounds that surrounded the great hall where no one seemed to live. An old bent man with a dull face.

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I was out of the wood now and walking quickly along the road towards Stone. As I walked along I pondered. How small and insignificant looked the houses and the gardens

and the plots of ground and the fields! How small they looked to me now since I had left the spreading, wonderful grounds that stretched around the great house! Even the very landscape itself seemed to have shrivelled. Everything seemed to live for the vast silent house behind me.

I wondered about it all as I went along.

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The road now bore off from the river, and soon I was in Stone—a quaint English village.

II.—ALONG THE ROAD TO WOLVERHAMPTON.

I.

It was market day in Stone, and I was standing in the market square in the middle of a throng of people. Horses and cattle and stock of all kinds were being sold.

A man caught my eye. And I suppose that it must have struck him that I possessed the eye of a person of wealth and substance for he at once began to try to sell me a horse. He told me of the virtues of this horse in rather a low voice as though he were afraid that someone else might hear, and my chance of obtaining a bargain would be gone. It was a horse gentle as a babe, and it was dowered with the bone and muscle necessary for the carrying of a man of my weight. Its action was something beautiful. All this he confided to me in the curious, technical language common to men who are accustomed to the handling and to the use of horses.

How much? I asked. Thirty pun! The dealer looked sharply at me as he named his price, and his fingers fumbled unconsciously with the lash of the whip he was carrying. And then, while I was studying him in silence, he again ran over the various merits and virtues

of the horse. This time his voice was even more confidential. He was a red-faced, burly, shrewd-eyed man, with the look of a bailiff.

And then I explained to him that I was not buying horses, but that I considered that his horse was one of the finest I had ever laid my eyes on. He laughed and moved away. What I had said had settled the matter. Men never praised the horses they were going to buy!

I went to the hotel where I had left my knapsack and got something to eat. And soon I was tramping gaily along the road to Stafford, which lay off from Stone seven miles.

I slept that night in Stafford and the middle of the next day found me at Penkridge, a beautiful little village ten miles off from Wolverhampton. It had a mediæval look, and was built up compactly together, as places were built in the rough times when men had to be continually on the alert to defend their families and their homes. It had the appearance, curiously enough, of some of the old places I had seen in the centre of Spain. The chief difference was that there was no wall surrounding it.

I went over to the inn, and soon I was sitting in its comfortable parlour among a lot of farmers. They had been attending a sale. The talk that was going on was concerning farming. One of the farmers was saying how hard it was to get labour, and he asserted

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that the only way out of the difficulty was to get woman labour. They would never be able to do much good till they had women working in the fields!

The rest of the farmers agreed with him. Men could not be got. They all flocked to the towns! And then I suggested that this trying to get women to do the work of men was rather un-English, and that in the end it was bad for the country. One of the farmers admitted this.

And then I heard something that astonished me. It was that American wheat commanded a higher price in the English market than did English wheat! The reason of this was because American wheat made bread that looked better to the eye. Bread that was whiter! Even the English working classes had grown to like and to demand very white bread. And the result was that fine, good, English wheat had actually to play second fiddle in the market to a wheat that was foreign.

The thing is of such importance that it is perhaps as well to explain the difference between English and American wheat. English wheat is hardier and stronger altogether than is American wheat, because of the fight it has to go through in growing in our difficult climate. A loaf made from English wheat is darker than is a loaf made from American wheat. But it is by far and away the best bread for English people to eat. In fact, people in Staffordshire have a saying to the

effect that bread made from English wheat will take you away and bring you home again while bread made from foreign wheat will take you away and leave you there.

To put the matter simply, American wheat has more fat-producing properties than English wheat. But, on the other hand, English wheat has more muscle and bone forming properties.

You can grow bigger and better physical men on bread grown from English wheat. But, further than this, it is well known that absolutely the best food for a man is the food that is grown in his own country. Bread is a staple and foundational food, and the quality of it will make or mar the men of a nation. And the bread made from American wheat cannot in any sense be nearly as good for us as the bread made from the wheat grown in our own country.

This is no reflection against American wheat. It is only saying that it is the product of a climate as different as possible from ours, and that the bread made from it, though it may look better, is not the best bread for our people.

The best bread for Englishmen is English bread.

Never mind if it looks darker. It is the best. It will take you away and bring you back home again, as the people say in the Midlands. It is a pity we can't grow more of it.

II.

It was getting on to five o'clock in the afternoon when I left Penkridge to face for Wolverhampton. After I had talked with the farmers, I had gone over to see a little church that had stood in the village for centuries. The church had about it the religious atmosphere, for it had been built in the times when people really believed in religion. Its aspect was solemn and impressive as it stood out against the soft, gray, half-clear sky.

When I had tramped eight miles I began to feel tired, and I hailed the driver of a cart that was passing me on the road. It was coming on to darkness, and I could see the light shining up from the furnaces around Wolverhampton.

The driver of the cart willingly gave me a lift. I sat near him on some sacks on the top of a barrel.

He was a man of about thirty-five years of age. His face had the bronzed redness of colour belonging to men who drive carts all day in the open air. He told me that he got twenty-four shillings a week, and that now and then he got a tip of twopence or threepence when he delivered a barrel of beer at a house. But this was not often. It was rarely he got a tip at a gentleman's house, he told me. Working people were by far the most generous. If he delivered only a four and a half gallon cask at a workman's house

he was always sure of his twopence! At a gentleman's house he was expected not only to tap a barrel of beer, but he had also to get it up into place on the stand, and usually he got nothing. He was not supposed by the Company to do this. His work was to deliver the beer and nothing else. He only tapped it and got it up into place to oblige!

Working people were the best!

The Company treated him well, he said. It allowed him half a gallon of beer a day for himself. But he usually only drank half of this. The rest he brought home.

He had four children, and he only got twenty-four shillings a week, but he had a better home than many a man in Wolverhampton who got his thirty or thirty-two shillings a week! His wife was a good manager. She could make one shilling go as far as many another woman could make two. She were a good 'un.

And she never went to the pawnshop. The pawnshop! That was it. That was what made many a man who got his thirty-two shillings a week harder up than he was!

Hard up! He was not hard up at all. And if he were to get sick it would be all right. His wife paid twopence a week regular to the club! He was all right. But if he'd had another woman for a wife things might have been a bit different!

And so the driver talked till we drove into the streets of Wolverhampton.

III.—FROM THE FIGHTING COCKS.

I.

I WAS leaning against the corner of the Fighting Cocks in Wolverhampton waiting for the tram to come along to take me to Dudley. At the opposite corner of the public house three other gentlemen were leaning. What they were waiting for I don't know. They seemed to be deeply meditating on nothing in particular.

One of them had a straw in his mouth, and as near as I could make out he seemed to be the chief philosopher of the party. He had a round, rather red face and deep set eyes and the straw in his mouth moved as he chewed it gently. His hands were thrust deep down into the pockets of his moleskin trousers and his whole air was of one who was at peace with the world.

It was a fine morning and the sun shone on the four of us as we eyed each other from the opposite corners of the public house. It was in my mind to ask them in to have a drink, but I was afraid that the doing of this would make me lose the tramcar. So I had to content myself with studying them.

The man who was gently chewing the straw engaged my particular attention and I seemed

to engage his, for he turned himself easily around so as to get a good look at me. And then both of us smiled. We felt I suppose that we were kindred spirits.

Just then a young man came up with a parcel under one arm and a bundle of iron rods under the other. He stood alongside me and it turned out that he was also waiting for the tramcar. We entered into conversation and I asked him who the men were on the opposite corner. He grinned at the question, and then in a low voice he informed me that they were "Rodneys." "Rodneys" was the term used in the Black Country for men who never worked, and who never intended to work. And still they lived. They waited patiently at the corners of public houses with the hope that someone would come along and ask them in to have a drink. Now and then they did little, odd jobs. But their chief pursuit was the holding up of the corners of public houses. All this information was given me by the young man with the parcel and the bundle of iron rods. He spoke in low tones —as if he were afraid that the "Rodneys" might hear him.

By this time the tramcar hove into sight. I turned for a last look at the "Rodneys." As I turned the man with the straw began to move towards me. The young man with the rods veered off a little as if in apprehension, but the "Rodney's" mission was one of peace. He looked me over with his shrewd,

deep set eyes, and then he asked me to stand himself and his mates a pot of beer.

They were out of work!

II.

THE tramcar was now whizzing down a lane and soon we were well out from Wolverhampton and into the midst of green fields. I felt a relief. The fields were of a soft, subdued richness—fields typical of England.

At the first stop a navvy got into the tramcar, and in a moment or so he and I were engaged in a discussion concerning the art of shovelling. I had done some navvying myself in my time and was therefore able to discourse upon the subtleties of the profession with some intelligence. This appealed to the navvy and his manner towards me became quite confidential.

He told me that the kind of shovel he preferred above all others was a "No. 4." With a "No. 4" he could shift dirt or gravel or clay with the best man going! And he went on to tell me of the numerous fellows who had failed to "run him off jobs." In fact it had been all the other way about. He had run them off the job. Running a man off a job means forcing the pace of work so that a man's power gives out in the trying to keep up with it and in the end he is obliged—through shame—to leave. Navvies sometimes do this—even in England. The idea is not to benefit

the contractor, but to show that one man is better than another.

This navvy hailed from the town of Stafford. He was a powerfully built rugged-faced man of about thirty-five. Though his face was dull of expression, there was still in his eyes a certain look of sharpness. His trousers were tied up—navvy fashion—at the knees.

His talk delighted me. I had heard the same old yarns and the same old boasts of shovelling power years before in shanties on the Pacific Slopes. He talked out in the loud, confident voice common to men who have nothing to lose in the world—nor anything to gain. Navvies are as natural in their manners as dukes. And as independent.

He had been getting sixpence an hour, but he had left the job and was going up to a place where he was to get sevenpence an hour!

When we got to Dudley we went to an ale-house in Blower's Green Road to drink a parting cup together. And then we shook hands and parted.

III.

DUDLEY is rather high up, and at the top of the main road I was able to see out over the country. It presented a strange spectacle. In the distance, past the stretches of green fields, were palls of low-lying, heavy smoke. In almost every direction one turned these dark palls stood out distinctly against the horizon. Clouds of moveless smoke. The sun

was shining and it brought them out in sharp relief against the green stretches of country. These palls of smoke covered towns —the Black Country towns. The smoke was so heavy and so enveloping that one could not see the chimneys from whence it was coming. It was as if these towns had been burned by some passing army of invasion and as if the glare and the fierceness of the flames had gone and left behind them the palls of doom. They gave out on the horizon an air of death.

Moveless clouds. Clouds shutting in the life of towns—shutting in the glare and redness of furnaces and fires—shutting in the sounds of the blows of myriads of hammers. Heavy, immense palls. Shutting out air and light — shutting out these towns from the world.

And this was the Black Country. And these were the Black Country towns. These places covered with palls. Surely a power had advanced upon them, and had smitten them, and had destroyed them. Surely the Moloch of civilization—Commerce—had laid upon them the imprimatur of doom. They had been given up to fire and smoke and darkness. Commerce had even given up the women of these towns to the eternal beating and welding of iron. It had given them up to the making of nails and the making of chains in places of dimness and darkness. Did the hands of the feudal lords of the times gone

by hundreds of years fall so heavily upon the ancestors of these people? Were the women of the times of old so condemned? Were the women so used?

And these were the Black Country towns? These towns covered with dark, moveless palls.



IV.—MAKING CHAIN.

THE fires of the forges shine from Cradley Heath, from Cradley, from Quarry Bank, from Lye and Stourbridge and from the rest of the surrounding towns.

The wind carries to the ear the sound of quick-striking hammers. You will hear the dull hammer-thud as the hammer pounds the metal just soft from the fire. You will hear the hammer-thud getting sharper and sharper, as the metal hardens on the point of the anvil, till in the end the thud has changed to a bright-sounding ringing blow. And you will hear voices. Voices clear and bright of sound. The workers in iron are singing at their anvils. Their voices mingle with the quick blows of hammers. You hear voices and hammer-blows and the faint driving swish of bellows bringing up the heat of the fires. In the air is the sharp, healthful smell of iron.

You are here in the midst of forges extending out and around for miles and miles. The forge is a fine place. In it are bred men. It brings out to the full the strength and heft and power of the body.

And you are here in the country of the forge—where iron is beaten and welded and put into shape. Before you as you walk along the fire of a forge is shining. As you approach the swish of the bellows loses its faintness

and the blows of the hammers become louder and louder and the fires become brighter and brighter. And here is the forge and here are the workers. They are women!

Women making chain.

Miles and miles of chain. It is made link by link, link by link—and the work goes on from day to day, from week to week, from year to year, from generation to generation. It is as if all the chain of the world was made in this country of smoke and fire and darkness. This black place. This tremendous, far-spreading forge. This vast smithy wherein women hammer and beat and weld iron. Wherein women forge chains for England. Wherein women forge chains for themselves and for their children and for their children's children.

Link by link. On the work goes. Link by link. Hear the surrounding sound of the quick-striking hammers. You hear it from the distance—you hear it from near by—it is behind you—it is before you—it is around you. An all-surrounding sound. A sound that has enclosed within it a curious inner sound. A soul-sound full of sadness and tragedy. It underlies the loud mingling ring of the hammers. It is beneath the bright, clear, sharp, outer sounds. This mournful soul-sound. It is as a dirge. Nay, it is a dirge.

The dirge of the womanhood of English-women.

Making chain. Hammering, beating, welding iron all through the day and into the

darkness. It is a strange task for one whose place is the home. A strange task for the woman whose place it is to bring children into the world and to tend them and care for them. The forge is a strange place for the mother—the woman.

Here is an old, bent, gray-haired woman making chain. Her hammer quickly beats and bends the white-hot iron into shape. In a moment she has finished and closed up the weld and another link is added to the long chain that lies in a heap by the side of the little forge where she is working. She turns to the fire and as she turns the end of the chain falls on the heap with a dull rattle.

With the old, bent, gray-haired woman are working her daughter and grand-daughter. Three generations.

Here in a forge farther on is a little boy. He is no more than two years old and he is sitting up on the cinders within a foot of the fire where his mother is working. The mother keeps an eye on her boy as she works quickly at the anvil. He is too little to leave by himself at home, and so she must keep him here. She must watch him and keep guard over him as she works here at the forge. She must rear him and tend him and still she must make chain. The little boy is half asleep as he sits by the glare of the forge. It is near to eight o'clock at night and it is time that he was in bed. But his mother must still work on.

Here a girl is working in a forge. Her left

hand grasps the handle of the bellows as she blows the fire up to a white heat. She is a good looking girl and a young man stands near her, talking to her as she works. One cannot hear what he is saying to her because of the sound from the blows of the hammer, but the light from the forge shines in her face. And the expression of her face tells as plain as words could tell that she is listening to the old story—the beautiful old story that is ever new. He is making love to her. He also makes chain, but he has stopped work some hours before and he has come to see his girl. She must work on till eight o'clock. After that she will be free to go for a walk with him.

The wise and good men who make the laws of England have a consideration for the women who make chain. They realize that house work must be done and that children must somehow be looked after and so they have been generous enough to allow the woman a chance to do a man's work at the forge and at the same time to do a woman's work at home. She can work up to eight o'clock at night. She is thus given a chance to earn money through the consideration and the generosity of the wise and good thieves who make the laws of England. To forbid her to do at once the work of a man and the work of a woman would be to commit a grave sin against the liberty of the individual.

The wages a woman can earn at making chain are at the most something less than nine

shillings a week. This is her average power of earning. For this she must work at least sixty hours in the week. And she must work as hard as she can the whole time. From morning till night her hammer must go. She must get up very early in the morning so as to get an hour or so for her house-work before she goes to the forge. And then she must work again in the house after eight o'clock at night.

It is a life of darkness.

And still the women do not know. They sing as they hammer the links of the chain that winds around themselves and their children. But the slave never knows.

And so the fires of the forges shine from Cradley Heath, from Cradley, from Quarry Bank, from Lye and Stourbridge and from the rest of the surrounding towns. And the women go on making the links of a great, great chain. They are forging a tremendous, sinister dark chain in a place of smoke and fire and darkness. An accursed, horrible chain for England. The women sing as they work. It is well. Let them sing.

* * * * * *

How the fires of the forges shine. How clear through the distance comes the ring of the bright-sounding hammers. These bright-sounding hammers. Beneath the clearness of their ringing there is an under-sound of mournfulness and tragedy.

The sound of a dirge.

V.—FORGING ANCHORS.

I WENT along with Smith to see the forging of the anchors. It was twelve o'clock in the day and the men were working with all their might at the fires in the great open forge. At one fire a huge anchor-shackle was being made. Over yonder an immense anchor was being quickly heeled over so that the men could get to work on one of the flukes that had just come out white from the fire. Dull, heavy shocks were coming from a steam-hammer as it quickly struck to shape an anchor-stock. Sparks were flying and cinders were rattling and clinkers were falling. Schehe sche. Schehe sche. Bellows were swishing steadily. Fires were glowing and roaring.

Here was a party of four strikers wielding their long-handled sledge-hammers with rhythm regular and steady. One. A man struck the hot iron on the anvil. Two. Another man's hammer came down. Three. Down came another. Four. And another. By this time the first striker had described a full circle with the head of his steel-faced sledge, and was down full on the iron again. Four men were describing four circles with their hammers. It was fine to watch the four swinging circles. Of all the labour in the world the labour in the forge is the best to see.

These big-muscled English smiths working grandly before their fires in this open forge! In watching them one forgot the pall of smoke hanging over this Cradley Heath. One forgot the leaden glint of its daylight. One almost forgot the stigma of abnormal woman-labour that lay upon the town. They were such fine fellows, these smiths—with their powerful hands, and their great arm and shoulder muscles, and their strong backs. Well-set men with frames sturdy as oaks. They had the honesty and straightness of look that comes into the faces of men who work in iron. That fine labour-look—the look that comes from the doing of healthful and suitable labour. These smiths were fellows of whom England might be proud—fellows who would go out into the field and smite the foes of their country even as they smote the iron on the anvils. Supple, powerful, big-muscled, well-set men.

Here came the "Johnny"—an immense sledge-hammer weighing a hundredweight and a quarter. I had never seen such a sledge-hammer before. It had a round tub-shaped head out of which stuck three handles. It took in all five men to work it—three men for the handles and two men to raise the head of the sledge up into the air. Its motion of course was a simple up and down—almost like the motion of a steam-hammer. But it was far more interesting to watch it at work than it was to watch a steam-hammer.

It was being used now to take the twist

out of a big anchor-shackle which had got into it in the forging. The shackle was laid —at only a red heat—on a block and the smith put a "dolly" on to the place that had to be struck. Then the two men grasped the handles of the great sledge near up to the head and with a combined effort they swung it up into the air. At the instant it was poised on high they stepped a pace back and the three men on the handles brought down the great tub-shaped head of the sledge on to the anchor-shackle. The blow of the sledge gave out a dull, booming sound.

The smith now gave a quick, close look at the shackle and a slight sign with his head and the "Johnny" went up into the air again and came down again mightily. And again.

This forge. Being in it made one feel that the labour of the smith would always be the labour of the hands of man. Machines would never do the work. One felt that men worked now in the forge much in the way that men had worked in forges thousands of years ago.

At one end of the forge side-welders were working. They were welding links of four-inch chain—the biggest chain made. The diameter of the iron of the link was four inches. This will give some idea of each separate link's weight and hugeness. The chain that was being forged looked as if it would have the power to bind down a mountain—as if it would keep it in its place as the earth quaked and shocked beneath it.

The side-welders only worked six or seven hours a day. If they kept at it longer than this the quality of their work suffered. The welds that they made had to be at one and absolute with the link. The power of one part of the link had to be as the power of all other parts. In this way there was got a chain of even strength. The ideal chain is the one in which all the links are of an even weight and strength. They will then all bear an equal part of a strain. The power of an enormous well-forged chain is all but incalculable.

The men drank a great deal in the forge for the work in it was hot and exhausting. Beer was what they favoured most and they kept it in demijohns. There is nothing like a demijohn for keeping beer cool when one is working in a hot place. I asked a smith if he cared for oatmeal and water, and he told me, no. Oatmeal and water might be well for standing the heat of the sun, but it was no good for standing the heat of a forge. Give him beer, he said—good beer! Fortified with beer he could kill any teetotaler going at the work. This he told me after taking a draught from the upturned demijohn. And then out of politeness he handed it to me.

It was good!

After I had complied with the smith's request to sample the beer I noticed a young man coming into the forge with a demijohn in each hand and several bottles stuck between his arms. He was the "drink-carrier" and

his mission in life was to go to the public house and bring back refreshing and stimulating fluids to the workers in the forge. Ever he was passing to and fro with bottles and demijohns and cans. He did nothing else. He was just a conveyer of stimulating fluids. I gazed upon him with much interest. He was a lanky young man of about nineteen and had a serious face.

The men in this forge were well paid as wages go for the work of the hands. The side-welders averaged fifty shillings a week. The strikers averaged between thirty-five shillings and two pounds a week. The anchor smiths averaged something over three pounds. They were in charge of the fires and were responsible if anything went wrong with the work. The men had a strong society which looked well after their interests.

At two o'clock the work in the forge was over. The side-welders and the smiths and the strikers were going home. They would be here again to-morrow and they would go on again with the forging of anchors and huge chains.

And in the great forge was stillness. And the fires were burning low and dim and the hammers were at rest. Yonder lay the immense three-handled sledge. Yonder lay an anchor. Silence was over all—over hammers and anvils and anchors and chains.

VI.—CRADLEY HEATH.

I.

CRADLEY HEATH lies down in a valley in South Staffordshire and is about three miles from Dudley. One gets the first glimpse of it in passing through Netherton—or rather the first glimpse of the dense pall of smoke that overhangs it. The first thing noticeable in walking down into it is the change in the air. It is heavy air charged to the full with the smell of iron and smoke.

At the top of the main road in Dudley the air is fresh and pure, but by the time one begins to descend into Cradley Heath the freshness and the purity are gone. And the temperature rises. One has something of the feeling of going down into a mine. To one who is air-sensitive there will come slight circles of pain round the eyes.

The daylight in Cradley Heath is different in quality from the light at the top of the main road in Dudley. It is not so dark as one would suppose in looking—from the distance—at the pall of smoke that overhangs it. It is rather that the light has in it a quality of leadenness. Leadenness is perhaps the word that best expresses the look of things generally in Cradley Heath. There is indeed almost a quality of

leadenness in the rays of the sun when they pierce down through the pall of smoke. To one who is acquainted with different climates the loss of the light-power of the sun will be apparent through the fact that objects some distance away possess no sharpness of outline. Their lines have a tendency to become blurred and indistinct. The sky up above is a mass of dull heavy gray.

Cradley Heath is a strange place. It looks by far the best in the night time when the fires shine out from the forges.

It is the centre of the industry of the making of chains and anchors. A town of the forge lying deep in a dark valley in the middle of England. Only workers live in it. The masters of the workers live off in a place more favoured of the air and the light.

Here in Cradley Heath are forged the mighty anchors and the mighty chains that hold secure the ships of England through the rage and press of winds and seas and storms. Here are forged massive, supple chains that defy the power of the elements—chains of which men might well be proud. And here again are forged chains—chains of which men might well be ashamed.

In Cradley Heath there is neither public library nor reading room nor recreation ground. At least this was the case when I was there. There was only the mortuary and the workhouse. The masters of the workers evidently felt that the beginning and the end of their

duty was to exact heavy toll from the labour of the men and the labour of the women.

The men of the place tried to form a working man's club. But they were forced to give up the idea in despair. A practical veto was put on it by those above them. There were too many restrictions. The men of Cradley Heath had either to resort to the public house if they desired social intercourse with each other after work, or they had to lounge about the Five Points.

A mortuary and a workhouse are hardly the fullest contribution towards the social welfare of an English town.

It may be of course that the sweaters, who live off these workers, have become more philanthropic within the last few months. I hope they have.

II.

Not only do women forge chain in Cradley Heath. They also make bricks. Any man who has ever done labouring work will know that brick-making is in some respects harder work than navvying. There is the incessant monotonous stooping and lifting. I, personally, have worked both at brick-making and at navvying and my verdict is, Give me navvying in preference. There is more variety in the efforts the body has to make, and at the end of the day a man feels less tired. Of the two I should say that brick-making was even more injurious to a woman than chain-making.

It was pitiful to watch these women. In fact to tell the truth the poor things didn't look like women at all. The heavy labour had taken the woman-shape from their bodies. The softness of the sex had gone from them. One hardly likes to describe them. They were narrow in the flank, just as men are who do heavy, continuous labour. And they had the same development of arm and the same flatness of the breast and the same development of the shoulders and the big muscles of the back. It is almost impossible to describe their faces. They were not the faces of women at all. They were in the main hard and masculine and without particular expression. In the eyes of nearly all of them was a dull, sullen look.

They were working away:—handling the wet soft heavy clay, slabbing up moulds, deftly carrying and laying the bricks in rows to dry, stacking and building up bricks, in fact doing everything that men could do in a brick-yard.

They worked in silence. They did not sing as the women sang when they were forging the chains. And their faces looked different from the faces of the women workers in iron. The chain women had not the look of masculinity that these women had. The work at the forge was more interesting and, of the two, less hurtful to them as women.

Here in the brick-yard. Laying bricks in monotonous, long, long, rows. Working in silence. Dull-faced, human beings with heavy

sorrowful eyes—human beings who had once been women. Making bricks in a brick-yard in silence.

To look at the faces of these workers gave one the feeling that they were dumb. That they had lost the power of expression. One had the feeling that they would be unable to answer if spoken to—or that if they did answer their voices would hardly have a human sound.

As one saw them laying the bricks in silence in the monotonous rows, one thought of the heavy pall of smoke that lay over Cradley Heath—the pall seen from the distance. One thought of the feeling that came to the mind of there being something sinister behind the thick, heavy, distant cloud.

I came out of the brick-yard and went on up Lomey Town. As I went along I wondered what the men of Cradley Heath thought about it all. Were they willing that their women should have to work in the brick-yards and at the forging of chains? Were they not aware of the fact that the wages that their women earned were actually taken out of their own wages? Did they think about the matter at all?

What a strange looking place was Cradley Heath. It lay down in a dark valley in South Staffordshire in the middle of England. No one cared anything about it. It was left to itself and to the workers who toiled out their lives in it. Its women slaved at the making of bricks and the making of chains.

And no one cared.

VII.—THE GUARDIANS.

THESE guardians were men of imagination. Whatever might be urged against them, no one, who was in the least just or fair, could urge that they were unable to put themselves in the places of others. They knew to a dot how far sixpence or a shilling would go, and they knew exactly the sustaining power there was in a workhouse loaf. That subtlest and most complex knowledge of all—a knowledge of human nature—was theirs. Beside the gift of imagination they possessed the almost diviner gift of discernment. The focussed wisdom of this board of guardians was something before which the most self-possessed would-be pauper might well quail—that is if the would-be pauper were in any way trying to hoodwink them.

I, who have been somewhat round, must confess that I was very much impressed indeed by the knowledge and perspicacity displayed by these watchers out of the doles that were given to the poor. Let us be fair. Let us give credit where credit is due. Were the high finances of England watched with a tithe of the care that these workhouse guardians watched the finances that were devoted for the relieving of the poor all would be well

with the State. And I would like to say here that I withdraw any imputation I have ever made against workhouse guardians. My strictures were founded upon the solid rock of ignorance. I had never had the privilege of meeting them as I was meeting them now. And I hasten to pay them a tribute. They are wise discerning men who at once possess imagination and extreme carefulness.

It must not be forgotten that it is imagination that is responsible for the bringing of man out of the slough and mud of ignorance and darkness. We owe everything we possess of value in this world to men being able to get away from themselves, so to speak. And these workhouse guardians had in the highest degree this wondrous power. Think of it. Men who would think nothing of spending a sovereign on a dinner were calculating in a nice and exact manner as to whether an old woman over seventy ought to get a half-a-crown or two shillings a week out of the poor rates. There was a careful and conscientious debate over this sixpence. These diners — if they wished—at a pound a time went over the whole grounds for and against. And finally it was agreed that the old woman should be made happy with two shillings a week and two or three workhouse loaves. I forget the exact number.

It is all very well for people to say things against the workhouse system and against guardians. It is all very well to cry out against

those who so carefully and conscientiously look after the poor—but surely it is only fair to ask even the most rabid of these denouncers if it does not show a fine public spirit when a man, who may spend a pound for a dinner if he chooses, gives his time and his thought and his imagination to the problem as to whether or not an old woman of over seventy should get an extra sixpence a week from the poor rates? Surely this question may in fairness be asked of these eternal grumblers who are always growling because the world chances to be round instead of being square.

For my own part I will confess to this:—Any man who may spend a pound on a dinner for himself and who of his own volition gives his valuable time as a workhouse guardian ought—instead of receiving vulgar abuse from alleged thinkers—to get a certain kind of a medal as a mark of esteem from the community.

A man came up who had been disabled from work through an accident to his hand. He was a man with a wife and five children. He gave a short history of himself to the guardians. It seemed that when he was in work and flourishing and had all his powers about him he could make from a pound to twenty-five shillings a week. It would take him a week to earn a guardian's dinner, that is if that guardian felt inclined to do himself somewhat well. And he stood here, cap in hand, asking for relief.

The chairman of the board of guardians

asked him to go out of the room for a little. They wanted to confer upon his case. And then there ensued a grave and weighty discussion. For here a really large sum was involved. It was not a case of two shillings or a half-a-crown a week. It was a case of five or six shillings a week and three or four loaves. The chairman of the board—a jolly looking English squire of the old school—was for giving him six shillings a week. But a well fed looking old man with a rather fine head would not hear of it. Five shillings! That was the sum—with four loaves—this well fed looking old man with the rather fine head thought would meet the case. And in the end this noble and intellectual looking old man with the—well, let it pass—this noble old man carried his point with the board, which was that the disabled man should get five shillings a week for two weeks. A grant of ten shillings! And a solemn hush came over the board as the squire let the man—who had been called in to hear the glad news—know of his good fortune. Ten shillings! A round and dignified sum, gentlemen.

The disabled man was going away, restraining with heroism his joy at the good fortune that had befallen his family of six, when he was called back. There was something else it seemed. The board wished to present him with a pearl of advice. It wished to dower this disabled but fortunate man with a little of its own wisdom.

The glistening pearl of advice was to the effect that the man should leave the house where he was living. He had to pay six shillings a week for it, and the guardians thought that a house for half-a-crown or three shillings a week might better suit one who had been reduced to the leaning upon their vast and generous grants. Six shillings a week for a house! It was a vast sum to pay. And the well fed looking old man with the rather fine head wagged his rather fine head in a way most portentous. Even the jolly looking squire looked grave. And I could see that his imagination was working as hard as it might, for the jolly looking squire lived in a beautiful, big house surrounded with beautiful, well-kept lawns—a house as large as a castle. His brow strained with the effort of imagining how awful it was for a family of seven to live in a house at six shillings a week rent when the father of that family was disabled and unable to work.

"You should get a smaller house," said a kindly and sympathetic voice to the disabled man who was standing, receiving his pearl of advice.

This kindly and sympathetic voice was owned by a person with a fine, clean-shaven face. This person had something of the look of an actor who played Shakesperian parts. He had large and beautiful eyes and an expression at once sympathetic and kindly and lofty.

He was a parson.

And I suppose he also had to work his imagination a bit, for parsons usually live, rent free, in roomy and beautiful houses that have beautiful gardens. And here I may as well say that there have been times when I have had hard thoughts about parsons. But really I was so taken with the kind and gentle interest that this parson took in the disabled man that I will endeavour not to have hard thoughts about the clergy any more.

"You should get a smaller house," said the parson again in a voice that was if possible more kindly and sympathetic than ever.

And the disabled man looked at him and said, "Thank you, sir." And then he turned and left the room laden with the pearl of advice and the thoughts of the ten shillings and the workhouse loaves that would come to him in the ripeness and fulness of time.

And so the work went on. These guardians were men of imagination. Whatever might be urged against them, no one, who was in the least just or fair, could urge that they were unable to put themselves in the places of others. They knew to a dot how far sixpence or a shilling would go, and they knew exactly the sustaining power there was in a workhouse loaf.

THE IRON ROAD.

I.—THE COMMON LODGING HOUSE.

I.

A CROWD of hungry men were gathered at night round the statue of Wellington in Victoria Square, Leeds.

They were the unemployed. They had no work to do. They were the Englishmen who live their lives under the shadow of starvation. Always the menace of hunger threatened them. But now the blow had fallen. Starvation was upon them. The dread herald of a terrible winter had appeared.

A glance would show that they were men who suffered from hunger. There was the hunger restlessness. That curious, wolfish alertness. And the drawn faces. And the hard dangerous look in the eyes. All these signs were plain to be seen by the one who had eyes. It was as if these men were being burned with a fire. These men who were gathered round the statue of the great soldier of England.

They had come here to express themselves. For England is wise. England allows expression.

But there are times when the policy of allowing expression is as the policy of Machiavelli. There are times when repression

lies by the skilful and subtle way of allowing open speech. The danger works itself away, but the fact that caused the danger remains. England is subtle in statecraft.

These hungry men were allowed the privilege of saying that they were hungry.

II.

THAT night I stopped at a big, common lodging house in Leeds. My mission was to go as a working man from Leeds to London. I was to tramp by the great North Road to see what I could see. I was to go to different places. To go along with the men who were looking for work. To accompany them here and there. To stay where they stayed and to live as they lived. For it is not given to a man to see things from the outside. If he would know, he must experience. And so I was here in this big common lodging house.

A man could get a bed here for threepence. And the highest price was sixpence. I had asked for a bed for threepence when I first came in, but they were all taken. So I got one for sixpence.

On going into the office of the lodging house a man had to give his name, and where he had come from, and where he was going. He was subjected to cross-examination.

I was sitting now in the big, gloomy kitchen, where the men were getting their suppers

ready. At one end of it was a shop where provisions were sold. It was presided over by a woman. Here you could make all sorts of purchases. You could buy a farthing's worth of milk or a halfpenny's worth of bread. You could get eggs or bacon or meat or cheese. The price of everything was low.

I got a meal here for ninepence halfpenny for myself and another man. We got half a pound of bacon for fourpence, four eggs for threepence, a loaf of bread for three halfpence, and a pennyworth of tea and sugar. And then we went to the other end of the kitchen and cooked the eggs and bacon, and made the tea at an immense range. After the meal was cooked, however, a difficulty sprang up. The lodging house provided one with plates and basins and cooking utensils. But it did not provide knives and forks. I got out of the difficulty by getting a knife and fork from the man who acted as sweeper-up and firer-up in the kitchen. I had to pay him twopence for the loan of the knife and fork. A penny was not enough. He informed me that the last knife and fork he had lent for a penny had been stolen. My mate took the knife and I took the fork. And so we ate our meal. I stirred up my tea with the haft of my fork.

There were rough tables in the kitchen and long forms to sit on, and perhaps there were fifty men in all, either preparing food, or eating, or watching other men eat. There were men in the kitchen who had paid for their bed,

but who had no money to buy anything to eat. And they were watching round in the hope of getting a piece of bread that might be left, or being asked to have a drink of tea. The gloom of the place and the hungry men watching the food that other men were eating made me depressed.

After supper was over I went into another room, where men were talking and smoking. They appeared mainly to be working men. Some of them were navvies. Very few genuine tramps were among them. Off in a corner a group were playing cards. I went over. They were playing the old game of "twenty-fives" at a halfpenny a hand. I watched them a little while and then went back into the kitchen and sat down near the cooking range. I had not been sitting there long when a man came up, trying to sell a handkerchief for a halfpenny. I asked him what he wanted it for. It was to make up his night's doss, he said. But it turned out that he wanted it for something else. For when I went back to the room where the card-playing was going on I found him taking a hand at "twenty-fives." Poor fellow! He was chancing his luck. And who could blame him?

The men were let up to the bedrooms just at the beginning of every hour after eight o'clock. They had to show their bed-checks to the man at the door, and when they were all in the door was closed till the beginning of the next hour. The reason of this was that no man could get

in who had not paid for a bed. It was also less bother for the proprietor. He was not forced to station himself at the door through the whole of the time.

Having paid sixpence, I was put into a big room where the beds were in small cubicles.

Taken altogether, the accommodation generally was not bad, if one were hardened to roughing it. But, of course, the less said about the cleanliness of the beds the better.

I was up the next morning before daylight. I had had enough of the lodging-house. I wanted to get along the road to Barnsley, which lay off nineteen miles dead to the south. I would not be able to take the Great North Road in going to it, but it struck me that I might as well see it, as it was a manufacturing town. Following the North Road at this juncture would lead me through an agricultural country.

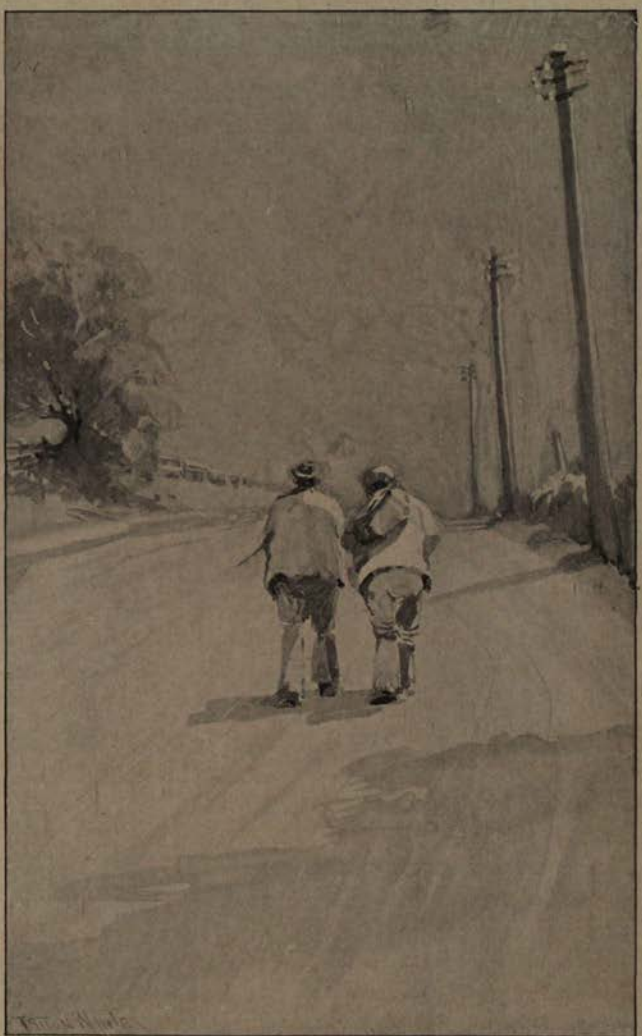
Day was breaking as Joe and I left the lodging-house. Joe was to come with me on my tramp to London. Not having anyone to talk to when one is on tramp is a lonesome idea.

We passed through the almost deserted streets of Leeds till we came to a big market. Here everything was alive and full of bustle. It did one good to get into it after the depression of the lodging house.

We went to a stall where coffee and sandwiches and cake were being sold to the market men. And here we made an excellent breakfast of coffee and sandwiches.

And then we went out and asked our way to Wakefield of the first man we met. He was going to his work, but he was an obliging fellow, for he went out of his way to put us on the right road.

As soon as we had crossed the River Aire we were in Hunslet. Wakefield was nine miles away from Leeds. We had to pass through it on our way to Barnsley.



THE IRON ROAD.

II.—MET IN PASSING.

We walked smartly along the Wakefield Road. It was a dull heavy morning, with a touch of the east wind in it. By this time we had reached the Thwaite Gate, but the smoke of Leeds was still with us.

Out ahead on the road I saw a man going the same way we were going. When we came up to him we fell into his gait for awhile. He was taking it easy—going slowly. But I wanted to talk to him and get his ideas concerning things in general. He was going vaguely along, looking for work.

He was about forty years old, and had the appearance of a mechanic. And he had the direct way of looking at things and at life that people have who are in the habit of facing facts as they are.

Things were bad everywhere, he said. A working-man now had no chance of making a living at all. As long as he could remember things had been steadily getting worse. He may have been a pessimist of course, but evidently his deductions were drawn from the facing of black facts. A man can only go by what he sees and knows.

He was a man with ideas of his own. And he blamed the introduction of machinery

for the pass to which the English working-man had come. As near as he could see it, machinery was only of benefit to the employers. It enabled them to crush down the working-man.

I put it to him that if men were put out of work at one branch of labour by the machines, the making of them and the handling of them gave other men work. But he posed me by asking how this helped the starving families of the men who were put out of work in the first place. But apart from all this he would not have it that machines gave as much work in other directions as they displaced in the first instance. He said that if machines saved labour they saved it, and that was the end of it. No—taking it all round, machinery was a curse to the working-man. That was his opinion.

I may say here that this generally was the opinion of all the working-men whom I questioned on the subject in my walk to London. They all agreed that machinery had turned out to be an absolute curse to their class. And it seems to me that there is a great deal in this. Of course, statisticians would prove that these men were all wrong, but as every one knows, statisticians are in effect a pack of the finest and most skilful liars going. They are experts, and experts are gentlemen who are closely related to the imaginative Ananias.

The next person I met was a jovial and

joyous tramp. I knew him at a glance. I had met his breed before. It was a pleasure to come into contact with him on a dull day. He was a young man with a red face, and he advised me to keep away from the casual ward in Barnsley. He evidently looked upon me as a brother. I was glad to see him. He had no ideas, pessimistic or otherwise, upon the subject of work. I would have kept longer with him upon the road but his pace was a bit too leisurely to suit me.

Wakefield I found to be a pretty, quaint little town. Here I stopped to freshen myself up with a pint of beer.

Night was just coming on when I got to Barnsley. I had walked nineteen miles, and felt tired. I had not yet got well into my stride upon the road.

I felt hungry, and went into a restaurant to get something to eat. And here I must say that when one looks rough it is not advisable to go into a restaurant in England. One is scowled at, and does not get proper attention. England is what one might call the land of the good appearance.

It would have been better if I had bought food at a shop and gone and cooked it at the doss-house—the common lodging-house—in Barnsley, for when the girl who came to wait on the table saw the scarf round my neck she tried to scowl me out of the place. She was most impudent, and would hardly get us what we wanted. She went on so that she

almost took the good out of the food we had to pay for. Women are sometimes very bad in this sense. They are absolute and utter failures as waiters. One man is worth a hundred of them. If a man does not come up to their idea of what good looks and a good appearance ought to be they treat him with but scant attention.

It was fourpence a night for a bed in the doss-house in Barnsley. We all slept together in a big dormitory.

The house was not big, but there was more variety in the types of men than there was in the lodging-house in Leeds. Here it was that I came across a poor, broken-down actor. He was a man with an intellectual face and the manner and the voice of a gentleman—one who had gone under. I talked with him as to the chance of a man doing something in the public-houses. He explained that it was very difficult. One had to get the consent of the landlord to do a recitation, and even when that was given there was only one night when it was of any use—the night when the working-men were paid their wages. But times now were very bad in Barnsley. He was a man who had been a great deal around. He had played with a company in America.

While I was talking to him in the kitchen of the lodging-house a starved-looking man came in to sell a scarf. It was a good scarf, and he wanted twopence for it. A man who was sitting next to me bought it from him.

He was going out of the kitchen with the twopence when the man who had bought the scarf called him back and gave him the one that was around his own neck. It was not so good as the one he had just bought from him, but it was far better than having no scarf at all. It was an incident showing up in a strong light the fact that no one really helps the poor but the poor.

The next day was Saturday, and we made Chesterfield, a place thirty-one miles from Barnsley. We passed through Rotherham and through Sheffield. We walked but twenty-five miles in all, for we took the tram for six miles between Rotherham and Sheffield. When a man has been walking through the country it is very trying to walk on flags. I have mentioned this before, but I mention it again: The country road gives as one steps along it, but the hard, ungiving flags jar and tire the body.

Chesterfield is an old-looking town, and has a church with a curious, crooked steeple. It was very lively on the Saturday night we were there. The streets were crowded with people, and free concerts—"free and easies"—were going on in the public houses. I went into one, and the idea suddenly came to me to sing a song and see if I could collect anything after the singing of it. Once in my life before I had tried this game with great success.

But the potman, or waiter, or whatever he was, would not hear of it. "Buskin'," he informed me, was not allowed.

III.—TOWARDS LONDON.

THE next day was Sunday and we set out to make Nottingham, a distance of twenty-six miles from Chesterfield. It was a misty, foggy morning and the sun appeared in the east, a dull red globe. I felt glad to get out of the doss-house where we had passed the night. The people who slept in it had a prejudice against the opening of windows. We had paid fivepence each for our beds.

We were going along the road to Mansfield at a swinging pace when we made out ahead of us through the mist the form of a woman. She turned out to be a little old woman named Mary Ann Reynolds. She was seventy-three years old—poverty had fallen upon her and she was going to a place some miles away to see if her daughter-in-law could take her in. She had no place to go to. She carried her worldly belongings in a basket under her cloak.

Her case was a very sad and a very hard one. She had had three sons killed at Spion Kop, Arthur, James, and Wilfred. These men who died for England belonged to H.M.S. "Excellent." And now all that England could do for the mother of these brave men was to ask her to go into the workhouse. This she had refused to do—and rightly. It was a

mean thing to ask her to go into a place where the poor are insulted and degraded.

And now she was homeless and shelterless after having borne men into the world who had given their lives for their country.

The above are the bare, simple facts of the poor old woman's story.

* * * * * *

We passed through Heath and got to Mansfield. We were now in the middle of what had once been the great Sherwood Forest. We were in the country of Robin Hood, that fine, gallant, highway robber. How things had changed since the good old days when this fine outlaw robbed the rich for the benefit of the poor. The fashion now was to rob the poor for the benefit of the rich.

The beer in Mansfield was delicious. It was beer drawn in the only way it ought to be drawn—from the wood. And after a pint of it each we advanced along the road as giants refreshed.

The country between Mansfield and Nottingham, a distance of fourteen miles, was almost uninhabited. It was a great level waste of cleared forest with patches of wood to be seen here and there in the distance.

Darkness had come when we got to the outskirts of Nottingham. And we were glad to mount the friendly tram that brought us into the middle of the town. It had been a day of hard marching.

In Nottingham a polite and deferential policeman appeared on the scene. I asked him where there was a common lodging house and he conducted us to a place called Leen Side in the Lower Marsh. Here we found a place at sixpence a night in Knotted Alley. He was really a good sort, this policeman. And I say this all the more readily as policemen are not always what they might be.

The next day we were on the Great North Road. We had to cut across the country to Grantham to find it. Finding it had been troublesome. Nearly everyone we met had different notions as to its whereabouts. But now we were on it at last—the great road that the old Romans had built through Britain.

Truly was it a wide, sweeping, wonderful road. It was unlike any other road I had ever trod on. Somehow one had the impression that it was built higher up than an ordinary road. And voices and sounds seemed to travel a greater distance upon it.

When we had stepped along it for about nine miles we met two tramps. They were going the opposite way from us, and one of them was a young Scotchman whose trousers were broken at the knees. His bare knees were showing plainly. But he was a good and jovial sort, as indeed were all the genuine tramps we came across. They lightened an otherwise cheerless road.

The four of us stopped to collogue, and the Scotchman and his mate told us about Stocken

Hall. It was about two miles ahead of us and a mile to the left off from the road, but it was well worth paying a visit, for everyone who called at the hall was given a loaf of bread and cheese. It mattered not how many people came to beg in the day. The loaf of bread and the cheese were there for each one. This was the burden of the Scotchman's story.

And it turned out to be true. For when we got to the mile-stone, marking eleven miles from Grantham, we turned down the road to the left and walked through a beautiful wood to the hall. As we went through the wood we met a man munching the remains of a loaf of bread. He grinned as he saw us and pointed over his shoulder behind him with his thumb.

We got to one of the side doors of the hall and the servant came and told us to wait for a moment. She knew what we wanted. Whilst we were waiting two other men came up. But they did not turn out to be common, ordinary beggars as we were. One was armed with a whistle and the other had a mouth organ. At once they began to play a piece. When it was over I asked the man with the whistle, who seemed to be the leader, what the name of the piece was that they had just played. He informed me in a lofty, superior manner that it was called the "Honeymoon." He evidently felt that I was but a common, ordinary beggar and that I might have restrained my curiosity. They then played "Hiawatha."

After a while the servant came out with a loaf of bread each and some cheese for me and my mate. To the musicians she gave money. And we walked off leaving the strolling musicians at the door in the middle of another tune.

This giving of food without question and without reserve to the passing, hungry people of the road was real and genuine charity. How different it was from the lying, organized, workhouse charity. And the noble, free-handed giver of this real charity was Lady Frances Cecil. And all that I can say is that I wish a long life and happiness to this fine Englishwoman. The presence of such a woman makes a man feel that, after all, England has some feelings of humanity left for those that have gone under. In the village of Stretton I heard that representations were being made to her ladyship to discontinue this charity. The reason given was that undesirable people—in the criminal sense—were attracted to the neighbourhood because of what was given.

A reason such as this is nonsensical. The homeless, hungry people who pass along the road are never people of the criminal class. There are mean, carping people who are always against the doing of any generous act. Her ladyship would be well advised to pay no attention to them.

That night we made Stamford, an old curious town of many churches. The dosshouse where we stopped was an old house

that had been built in mediæval times. It was at least six or seven hundred years old. A strong place of low ceilings and massive oaken beams.

Here the beds were fourpence a night.

Seven or eight men were in the kitchen and an argument was going on concerning the action of the Russian fleet in firing on the defenceless fishing boats. These people, who were deep in the mire of a hopeless and degrading poverty, had at the very least as strong a sense of the dignity and honour of their country as any people could have. They were willing to stand well by England though it could hardly be said that England had stood well by them. These men of the fourpenny doss-house were as good and as true men as any England could boast of.

IV.—PILGRIMS OF THE WAY.

We got to Stilton as darkness was coming on—the village from which the world-famous cheese takes its name. It turned out to be a slow-going place of five hundred inhabitants. It had fallen far behind the fame of its name. To be in it made one realize that after all names were the things that counted in the world. It made one feel that Shakespeare was a bit slack when he questioned the value of them. Here was the quiet Stilton, the place where but little, if indeed any, of the delightful cheese was made. But it gave the cheese a name that rang—if one might put it in a poetic way—throughout the world.

Just a tiny place on the Great North Road. I had doubled back on my journey to see what it was like.

Joe and I found it difficult to get lodgings in Stilton. The keepers of the inns seemed to be of an observant turn of mind. They evidently took us for rough characters.

But at last we found a home for fourpence the night. It was a place that took in men and women. The wandering couples that passed up and down the great road patronized it.

The women in it were rough and effective in their method of speech, but they were

decent. Altogether this lodging-house was most interesting. There was an old Scotchman and his wife, and a hard-faced East-end-of-London man and his wife, and a country yokel and his wife. There was also a lad of sixteen, who told me that as soon as he was big enough he was going to join the Army. Joining the Army was better than being starved, he said.

The yokel's wife was a silent young woman who smoked a clay pipe. She rarely joined in the conversation, which ran mainly upon poaching and the meanness generally of the people who owned the land.

The hard-faced man from London seemed to know a thing or two. He and his wife had been gathering blackberries that day. But there was not much money to be earned at it.

I got on well with the hard-faced man from London. He had been in the Army. We discussed the methods of getting ahead of the people who owned the land, and I was anxious to go out and see how things were managed. But the night was not a propitious night. And besides, the gamekeepers were too much on the alert. Two men were already in gaol awaiting the tender mercies of the magistrates who had the impudence to say that they owned the land that God had created for all men.

The night being young, a desire suddenly came upon me to see something of the life of Stilton, and Joe and I and the man from London went forth to an inn that stood in the darkness on the main road.

Navvies were making merry in the taproom when we went in. They were hardy-looking, powerful men. Work in the open air develops and hardens the body in a far more effective way than any kind of drill or gymnastics.

One of the navvies began to sing a song. It was a poaching—or, as he called it, a "powchin'" song. And a great song it was. It was really a story describing a poor man's quest of food and adventure. A thrilling story set to a curious old tune that was as like as not hundreds of years old. It fired one to listen to it. It is strange that the most effective songs are never given by the world's great singers.

This was one of the verses as near as I could get it:

'Ere's a 'ealth to every gentleman as lives in Lincolnshire,
Good luck to every powcher as wants to get a 'are,
Bad luck to every gamekeeper as will not sell 'is deer,
We took it to a sartin place and sowd it for a crown,
We sowd it for a crown, my boys, but Ah didn't tell you weer,
For it's my delight on a cloudy night at the season of the year.

It is impossible to convey the effect of this splendid song as the navvy trolled it forth in the dimly-lit inn. It was a genuine song of the soil and of the life. One of the only real songs. If heard in any place other than this little inn on the great road it would have lost some of its effect.



THE POACHER.

Here in this little inn in this village in the darkness I was witnessing an expression of the life of the country—the only life that is worth anything. A great town is but a great disease.

The next morning we bade farewell to the people in the lodging-house. I was sorry to leave the man from London.

We were making for Huntingdon, which lay down to the south fourteen miles. The morning was sharp and bracing, just right for walking. It was a pleasure to step out on the road.

We came up with a slight, worn-looking man with a beard. His gait showed that he was one who had walked the road for a long time. It was a slow, easy gait, well under three miles an hour.

His face was sad and weary and haggard. The expression upon it was not that of the genuine tramp. He had not learned the philosophy of the road, and never would. He was one who was really down.

His voice was like himself, poor and thin and vague. Years before he had been a merchant in the north of Scotland. But his wife had died, and being very fond of her, he had lost interest in things. And so things had gone smash. And he had come down and down till now he was an outcast on the road, going without aim or purpose hither and thither. A man who was lost.

To look at him now one would never have thought that a time had been when he was of

some account in the world. One would never have thought that there had been a time when a home had depended upon him—that in the past a woman had loved him and looked up to him. His look was so quiet and still, and in a way so vacant. Poor old fellow. It went to my heart to see him going lonely along the iron road.

* * * * * *

We were in Huntingdon—a picturesque, quaint place. It had a quiet air. The pulse of life beat in it easily and evenly. And still it was not a town that slept. Though it was a place of quietude you still felt that you were somehow in touch with the great world that lay beyond.

Here was the Great Ouse—a broad, quiet, even river. And over on the other side of the bridge that spanned it was Godmanchester—a place older and more picturesque-looking even than Huntingdon.

The bridge that spanned the Ouse had curious triangular abutments. I had never seen such a bridge before, and I tried to find out something about it. But the old man whom I asked could tell me nothing. Indeed, the expression upon his face as he was telling me that he knew nothing about it seemed to indicate a wonder as to the strangeness of my question.

Over it we passed on our way along the road.

V.—THE SPIKE.

I.

THE homeless men who go along the road call the casual ward the spike. They have named it with a slang word that has in it a terrible meaning. It means that when you have come to the very end of things you are impaled. You are hungry, you are penniless, you are wet, you are cold, and here at the end of the dark, winter day there awaits for you the spike. It may be that you have laboured hard through the whole of your life. It may be that you have fought and bled to uphold the name and the might of England. But it matters not. Another torture awaits you. You are to be impaled.

The regular tramp never goes to the spike. The only men who go there are the unfortunate men who are out of work. Those who know not the ways and the resources of the road.

The spike is the last word of the cruel and damnable workhouse system that disgraces England. It is the flower of organized charity. And here let the fact be put forth that England treats her penniless ones in a more cruel way than does any other country in the world. It would be better if England pitched the money

that goes to keep up the workhouse into the sea. It is worse than wasted. It would be more merciful if she took out her poor and shot them down in cold blood on the public roads.

You cannot organize charity. For man is made neither by a rule nor by a plan. The money given to the workhouse is money given for the insult and the torture of the poor. It is blood money. Money given for the betrayal of those that are unfortunate.

In the spike you must pick four pounds of unbeaten oakum for the accommodation that is given you. And there is no man living who can pick four pounds of unbeaten oakum in a day. In prison, where men are used to picking it, it is reckoned a good day's work if a man picks two pounds of unbeaten oakum.

Or you must break from ten hundred to thirteen hundred weight of stone. The most powerful man, used to the work and well fed, could hardly break this amount of stone in a day.

In the spike you are expected to do this unfair task of work on bread and water. Should you be unable or unwilling to do it, you will be punished by a well fed, well housed magistrate.

Twopence, or at the very outside threepence, would well represent the value of what you receive. And for this you must give back at least ten times the equivalent in bodily labour. What is left of your self respect and

your power of body is stolen from you, and in its place there is bestowed on you a mean, lying gift that is surrounded with insulting and degrading conditions. You are down and organized charity robs you while you are down.

Well might the homeless, hungry men who go along the road call the casual ward the spike.

II.

I WENT and looked through the bars of the great iron gate of the workhouse in Hitchin. It was night and a light was burning in the lodge. I had walked twenty-six miles that day.

A man came forward as I rattled at the gate.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"I want to get in for the night."

"You'll have to pick four pounds of oakum in the morning if you come in here."

He looked sharply at me as he gave me this information.

"All right," I said. And I was let in through the gate.

In the lodge I was asked my name and my age and my trade, and where I had come from and where I was going to. And then I was searched just as one would be in a police station.

When all this was over I was given a piece of dry bread, and I was told to go along down the workhouse yard till I came to the

second door on my left through which I was to turn.

I went slowly on through the darkness and turned through the door as directed. I was in the spike.

It was an oblong, cell-like room partitioned off into two parts. The part to the left—about four-fifths of the length of the whole room—was where the casuals slept. The smaller part of the room, into which I had entered from the workhouse yard, was half filled with smoke coming from a worn looking stove in which an old man was trying to make up a fire. Against a wall to the right of this room was a bath of the ordinary size which was half full of filthy water. The water might well be filthy, for thirteen men had washed their bodies in it without its being changed. In the room was the curious, lowering, sickening smell of the low lodging house.

Nothing was said to me about the taking of a bath, and I sat down on a form near the stove with the bread that had been given me at the lodge in my hand. It was now about half-past seven and I was wishing that I could lie down somewhere. I was tired with my tramp.

But a surprise was in store for me. The old man at the stove—who seemed to be in charge of the casual ward—told me that there was no hammock for me. I would have to lie on the floor! It was a stone floor, but I would have to lie on it.

To lie on a stone floor is worse than to lie on wet earth, and I would have made my way out then and there, police or no police, only that I was determined to see how far organized charity would really go with a destitute man. I was determined to have it tested upon my own body. It would be well if the well fed and well housed magistrates were forced to do the same thing. It might put a little humanity into them.

By right of law the workhouse—when it allowed me in—should have provided me with accommodation if it even had to go the length of putting me up at a lodging house in the town. But the workhouse dodges and evades even the mean law that England has made for its destitute people. It is as well for me to go fully into what happened in this casual ward, for I feel sure that if the working men of England only knew how they would be treated when misfortune came upon them they would never rest till the present workhouse system was swept into the hell to which it belongs. The trouble is that the true nature of these abominable casual wards is not generally known to the public.

I went into the place where the destitute men were lying in the hammocks. There were nine hammocks, with a man in each of them. And there were two men lying on the stone floor beneath the hammocks. It turned out that I was not the only man who had to lie on the floor. I was told that two other men

had been accommodated, but they had been given hammocks in another place. Counting myself, fourteen men had come in that night.

I went back to the old man, and he gave me two small, rough blankets which turned out to be infested with lice.

III.

I WAS still thinking about my having to sleep upon the stone floor. I did not like the idea at all, and I asked the old man if there were no way out of it. But there was no way, he told me shortly. I pressed him, however, for sleeping on such a floor in the winter time was enough to kill a man. Couldn't he get me some planks to lie on? Or couldn't he get me some straw to put on the floor? His answer to my questions was that I would have to do as the other two men were doing.

And then a thought came to me. My eye fell upon the drain-board that lay by the side of the bath. It was about five feet long and it was wet from the men standing upon it after getting out of the bath. But wet wood wouldn't strike so cold into the body as stone. I would take the drain-board in where the casuals were sleeping and lie upon it!

I picked it up and stood it on end.

"I'll take this," I said to the old man.

He made no objection, and I took it inside along with an empty, zinc bucket. And I laid the board down between two hammocks,

spread one of the blankets upon it, put the zinc bucket on its side between the top end of it and the wall to act as a pillow, and stretched myself down. I was tired enough to lie anywhere.

Whilst I was doing all this I was complimented by various voices from the hammocks upon my idea in thinking of the drain-board. Some were joking, some were ironical. I could hear the voices round me, but I could not make out the faces of the casuals. It was too dark. The only light that was in the place was a feeble dim light which came through the open door from the smaller compartment where the old man was at the stove. The place where the casuals were lying was a place of shadows and blackness.

I gave the piece of bread I had been given at the lodge to a man who was in the hammock nearest me. I was unable to eat it. It turned out that this man was a soldier who had been in the fight at Majuba Hill.

And then the old man at the stove slammed and bolted the door at the end of the compartment and we were in utter pitch-black darkness.

Our voices rose. Everyone seemed to talk at once. Voice answered voice through the ward. The effect of a number of men talking through the darkness was strange. We singled each other out by the character and peculiarity of our voices. The hearing became intensified. I could understand now how the hearing

of blind people became subtle and quickened and more alive.

Men spoke of the happenings of the day. They told of how they had looked for work and how far they had tramped. They spoke of where they were going when they would be let out of the spike. They would not be let out till the morning but one following. They would have to work picking oakum through the whole of the next day. The conversation shifted curiously in the darkness. But it was as controlled and related as if it were daytime and the men were able to see one another. A deep-voiced man had been in many spikes. He was a navvy who followed public works. And he had also been a soldier. He cursed England and said that its Government cared nothing for a man when it had had its whack out of him. This man was a violent man who had often been in prisons. He told of how he had got nine months' hard labour for assaulting a workhouse master who had tried to bully him. And as I lay on the wet drainboard I must confess that all my sympathies were with the deep-voiced navvy. I would have rejoiced had he killed a dozen workhouse masters. They were an unworthy breed.

How different being in gaol was to being in the spike, said the navvy. The gaol was a palace compared with it. But it was difficult for a man who was hungry and out of work to get into gaol now! A man had to have two or three good characters. And one of them

ought to be from a parson! The navvy had a sense of iron humour.

In fact a sense of iron humour pervaded the whole conversation. When men are in the last ditch the mockery of life appeals to them.

IV.

How the long night passed I cannot tell. The conversation in the darkness kept up for hours and hours. And then it gradually died away.

I never slept through the whole night.

Here at last was dawn. I saw it coming through a chink above in the roof. And soon the men began to talk again. And in time the workhouse bell rang. And the door of the ward was opened and the old man I had seen the night before came and told us to get up.

We got up from the filthy blankets and put on what clothes we had taken off.

Now it was full daylight in the long cell-like room. And there was the man with the deep voice—the navvy. He was a powerful man not much over thirty, and his face was strong and hard. He was a navvy with the bearing of a soldier. His trousers were gathered up with leg-straps at the knees after the fashion of navvies.

There was a poor, miserable looking old man with a beard. And there was a still more miserable looking lad of eighteen. There was the man who had fought at Majuba. And there

was a tall silent man who spoke not a word. It turned out that he had come into the workhouse the night before with his wife and children. They had been separated.

It was a curious crowd. Twelve all told. A miserable crowd that had fallen into the merciless clutch of organized charity.

Breakfast. Here it was! A piece of dry bread for each man, and a drink of water out of a bucket. For dinner it would be a piece of dry bread again and an ounce and a half of cheese. For supper it would again be a piece of dry bread and a drink of water.

Workhouse charity. It was enough to put black murder into the heart of any man who was a man. And for this charity England paid millions of money a year. The thoughts of this charity were enough to make a man curse his country.

In came the oakum. Four pounds of it for every man. Unbeaten oakum. It would take a man who was unused to the work more than a week to pick it. This unbeaten oakum was in the shape of short pieces of rope from six to nine inches long. It was hard and black through being soaked in tar.

The navvy and the man from Majuba began to talk about soldiering. Both of them had been in the artillery.

The porter now came in and told me and the other two men, who had had to sleep on the floor, that in consideration of this we would be let out at half-past ten that morning. The

rest of the men would have to pick oakum through the whole of the day. They would be let out on the following morning—if they did their task to the satisfaction of the workhouse master. This was the rule of the casual ward:—Men were kept there two nights and one day. But the actual time of their getting out really depended upon the whim of the workhouse master, for the work meted out was more than any man could do in one day.

By half-past ten I had picked about two ounces of the oakum. It was trying and detestable work. I would far sooner have broken stones.

The porter took the three of us down the yard and let us out the great iron workhouse gate.

And as I walked down the road it seemed to me that it would be far better for a destitute man to sleep out in the snow and the rain than to avail himself of the hospitality of the Spike.

VI.—COMING TO LONDON.

I.

I WALKED through the archway and into the courts of Trinity College. By this time I was looking very hard and rough indeed. My sojourn upon the road had given me a begrimed and trampish appearance.

The porter who was on guard at the gate came towards me and requested me in a gentle voice to put out my cigarette. His manner of doing this was at once reproachful and urbane. And he went on to tell me that the students were not allowed to smoke as they passed through. His way, generally, of telling me all this was such as to almost give me the impression that I might smoke if I liked, but, really, that the dons and the students and the proctors and the bulldogs, and indeed everyone all told who was in and around the college, would be awfully obliged if I refrained from smoking. Who that was human could resist such an appeal? At once I put out my cigarette. And I walked away wondering at the fact that a college porter could be so polite and gentle to an obvious tramp. The people round the colleges in Cambridge evidently possessed manners. I was filled with admiration and what might be called a pleased awe.

I passed by grave looking young men with

caps and gowns—young men who had about them the deep gravity of extreme youth. They looked neither to the right nor left, but passed solemnly and seriously forth. They bestowed not even the tenth of a glance upon the rough, burly looking tramp who was taking them in from the side of his eye. I was much impressed by their dignity of aspect and bearing.

It was the first time in my life that I had ever set eyes upon a real, and I might say, live college. I had often heard of this university, and I had come out of my way to visit it. I wanted if possible to contrast it and its students and its atmosphere with the ways and the life of the people I had been living with on the road —the people of the submerged class. But it was impossible to form any contrast. Contrast after all implies some form of relation. And there was absolutely no relation between the life and the calm atmosphere of this beautiful place, and the life of the workhouse and the spike and the submerged class generally. One could in no way give you a conception of the other. They were more apart than the poles.

How beautiful was this Trinity College. It was here that the King had spent his student days. An old, flagged, wonderful place of courts and squares and arches and yards. A place of green plots and cloisters and gardens and rows of old and beautiful trees that lined quiet avenues. It was a place apart from the

bustle and noise and hurry of the world. A strangely beautiful place, the dignity and calm of thought. A wonderful place of quietude. It expressed the higher and nobler elements of the mind of man.

Surely it was good for men to live for a while in this place. True, it was not in touch with the outside world. But it suffered nothing because of that. The outside world does not know everything. It is in too great a hurry. It knows but little of quietude and nobility. It seemed to me that this old, beautiful college was wiser than the world. It could tell its students things that the world could never tell them. How fine a thing it would be if all the lads in England could live for a while in such a place.

This old, beautiful college.

II.

I WAS nearing London. I could feel from the distance its influence stretching out upon the Great North Road. I came upon a man who was going towards it. He was a man in the middle of life, but he had never seen the great world town. He had come from the north. Times were bad and he had got out of work.

I asked him if he thought he could do anything in London. No, he had little hopes of getting anything to do there. But he would like to see it. He would like to be in it if only for once in his life. He told me that men

had passed him on the road coming from it. They had told him that things were bad there for the working-man. But he was not going back. Things were bad where he had come from. He might as well go on. Anyway he would look upon the wonderful town. And perhaps luck might come to him. Yes, he had a wife and family up north. But what could he do? He must go on and try to find work.

Others were going slowly towards the great town. Circumstances had broken them from their moorings and they were drifting towards the world's mighty centre. It was as if they were not going of themselves. They were drifting towards this London without faith and without hope.

Far in the distance could be seen the smoke that ever hangs over the tremendous town. It was as the smoke from a vast, slow, all-spreading furnace. The smoke arising from an infinite holocaust.

These people who were weary and broken were going towards it. Those who were pushed aside in the iron struggle were slowly nearing it. They were going along the iron road to the iron town. The weak ones. Or were they the weak ones? Were they not rather the ones who had been from their birth submerged? Might there not be amongst them some man of power? It is said that power will come forth, that power will out. It is said that power is indomitable and invincible. But this is not always so. There are stronger

things even than power. There are mightier forces. There is chance, and there is circumstance. Power may be held within the grip of circumstance as fire is held within the coal that lies buried deep down in the dark fissures of mighty iron rocks.

Going to London.

And now could be heard the mighty roar of the town. It spread forth and seized and shook the air. It caught and thrilled those who were going towards it along the iron road.

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And here was the dusk, and here was the night. And the lights of the vast London were flaring and shining.

Before the eyes of those who were going slowly along was a spreading, roaring, immenseness filled with lights and glarings and strange shadows.

The roar was becoming louder. And now there was in it a deep, sinister note. There was in it a dread threatening.

Into the immense, strange town were coming the men whom circumstance had broken away from their moorings. Fate had done with them and cast them aside and they were being drawn in. They were coming slowly along up the great iron road. They were coming slowly into the roaring, spreading immenseness filled with lights and glarings and strange shadows.

Coming to London.

STONEHENGE TO TINTAGEL.

I.—THE TWO TEMPLES.

I.

As you approach from the north-east the cathedral rises softly before you—a wonderful, silver shining, gray vision. A cathedral as of the Holy Spirit. About it is a curious, subdued, magical air. It is as if it might disappear from before you. Standing in the cool green around it are great elms of the far past.

A wonderful, gray shining, holy vision. Its beauty is of the soft English beauty. In the masses of spired, windowed and carven stone there is an effect of graceful lightness—or rather is there an effect as if the whole silver shining cathedral were a picture evoked from out the past by a beneficent and sublime magic.

Truly is this a holy place expressing the idea of God.

And the soft-toned silver chimes ring out from the tower. The sounds fit magically into the strange and holy picture shrined in the stone of old.

Gray, silver shining cathedral, old wonderful elms, and softly green, cool grass make a picture of repose rising as if evoked from out the past.

This cathedral in the close of Sarum.
A gray, silver shining, holy place.

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Approach the great west door. High up before you, figured in stone, stand those who grasped the power of the past. Yonder, high up, is a mitred abbot. And yonder another. And yonder a young warrior grasps a great sword. And there is a tender and beautiful woman. Over the great west door is the Virgin with the Child.

Enter. And you are in a vast gray place of columns and arches and high roofings and groinings and naves and transepts and windows strangely stained, and great and far spaces.

A great gray place. A holy place of silver shining.

And organ sounds roll through the vastness. And there arise clear voices that sound through the cathedral. And yonder far, far off through the distance stands a white robed figure, invoking.

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This temple of the Holy Spirit. This strange gray shining cathedral of Salisbury.

II.

I CAME along upon the road to Amesbury over a great rolling plain. It was a wonderful day of blue and silver and bright gold.

It was a plain full of strange and vast suggestion. One felt as if great mountains might suddenly break up from it. A plain clothed in yellow and in far stretching green.

A day of shining silver and bright gold.

A lark sang against a white cloud. And beyond this cloud was a range of white, magic mountains sailing in the deep, clear blue. Down behind them the gold lights and shades crept over the land. And the song of the lark rang out to the far, white magic mountains.

I turned and yonder the spire of the cathedral rose as a sharp high lance up from behind the downward roll of the plain. The town of Salisbury was gone. But there was the vast spire-lance coming high up over the land. And yonder to the side stood the hill of Old Sarum. —the rampart hill of olden times that had commanded the country around and whereon stood places of God and places of arms.

Perhaps this plain clothed in summer red and green and gold was the most beautiful plain in the world.

For miles I went along till I came to the little ancient town that nestled in a dip of the great stretching and undulating plain. Here a river sang on its way to the sea. It went on shining through the green meadows, singing with a soft, strange under-voice. A clear beautiful river, singing in the light.

And around this ancient place were green mysterious groves.

Here was the place where walked the Druids.

Here they lived and passed to perform sacred and hallowed rites. They were gone, but here still was the greenness and here still was the mystery. And here was the clear, beautiful river still singing in the light.

And from Amesbury I turned along a road that ran through a green grove. And the grove grew dark. And I passed again into the lightness of the plain.

On I went.

And now there were thick groves here and there and yonder in the distance of the plain.

The plain had suddenly become greater and fuller of mystery.

The air was filled with luminousness. The soft green of the land and the bright gold of the sun and the clear blue of the sky reflected one from the other and one into the other, creating the wonderful luminousness that at times appears in England. And out from it came the song of the larks. The plain was filled with light and sound.

I passed by a grove on my right and as I came to the end of it a new stretch of the plain appeared before me off upon which stood a group of great stones throwing shadows one upon the other.

A group of sombre, shadowing stones!

They suddenly came to the vision upon the plain that stretched from the end of the grove. All round was the wonderful luminousness that came of the accord of the bright gold of the sun and the clear blue of the sky and the soft

green of the great rolling plain. And in the midst of this luminousness was the group of shadowing stones.

A dim group of stones standing off in the fulness of a great light. Yonder they had stood upon the up roll of the plain through thousands of years. Their shadows had fallen day by day through a profound reach of time. The men who had erected them had gone into the shadows that lay far beyond even the memory of tradition. This dim group of stones had outlived all.

Here in this temple of the far past was born the soul of England. Here man had learned of the power that lay outside himself. He had adored this power profound within the circle of the stone temple that man now called Stonehenge. He had adored the mystery and the wonder of the light—the Giver of all things. And he had built a temple that had outlived him. A temple that was a tribute to the wondrous light that still was shining.

He had erected this lasting temple upon the up roll of a great plain—a plain that bore meanings mysterious and strange and that was filled with a luminousness. The man of old had chosen a fitting place of free air and wind and light for his stone temple to the sun.

These giant, strangely shadowing stones of the old time. They brought awe and mystery to the soul. Here in their midst had grown the souls of the men who were

gone. They had stretched forth their hands to invoke their God who came up, full-powered, over the world. Their voices chanted forth in adoration of their stupendous and beneficent God. They performed their sacred and hallowed rites. These men of old. And they were gone now and here were the strangely shadowing stones.

They were gone, but their story was being told. They were gone, but here was still their illimitable and beneficent God moving, full-powered, in the clear blue of the Heavens above their temple.

They were gone, but the shadows still moved within the lonely circle.

II.—WINCHESTER TO SOUTHAMPTON.

I.

WINCHESTER is an easy, old world place where the people realize to the full that every day possesses twenty-four good, long hours. There is neither hurry nor bustle nor excitement in the streets. You are in a place where you are sure that there are other days beside to-day. To-morrow will certainly arrive in good easy old Winchester.

And a good thing. There is too much hurry and scurry in the world. People are too anxious to be up and doing the thing that in the end counts for nothing. London might well learn a thing or two from Winchester.

I know, of course, that Winchester possesses old and antique and interesting places. It is of tremendous historic interest. But I fear that I did not dive too deeply into this aspect of the charming old town. I took a leaf out of the book of the Wintonians and ambled easily about. After all, Winchester had been fully and well tackled by the people who possess what is called the historic sense—I mean the people who know all about what happened yesterday.

The Wintonians are very polite and cour-

teous. And I must say here that I am looking well out for the next ruffian who dares to say that the English have no manners. Usually these recreant ruffians have spent a little time in France and they come home full of scorn for what they are pleased to call the crude manners of the people of their own country.

All that I can say to these libellous travellers is to ask them to visit good easy old Winchester. There they will find people who are at once courteous and kindly and polite. I, myself, once said that the English possessed no manners. But I now beg leave to make a most humble retractation. I talked without the knowledge. For the Wintonians save the situation. They are really very nice people indeed. They are a credit to England.

If I may be pardoned the use of a homely but somewhat vulgar simile, I might say that the Wintonians — in this respect — save the national bacon. They are shedding the lustre of politeness over their country.

I found myself at the beautiful college. And I was shown round the ancient and quaint seat of learning by the porter who possessed the manners of a duke and a head master and a founder of the college all combined. I have never met any of these people, but my instinct tells me that the porter's manner must have been of this blend, for he was at once regal and instructive and very kindly. He told one things in a full, beautiful and orotund

voice. Occasionally he strayed into humour —but it was a humour that was impressive and in keeping with his manner. He was a most important and kindly and individual person and fully fitted by nature, I should judge, to uphold the dignity and worth of this old seat of learning. I cannot imagine the most gifted head master showing visitors around with a tithe of his impressiveness. To be in his presence was to feel that Winchester was indeed a fitting place for the moulding and the teaching of the young lads who were destined in the fulness and ripeness of time to govern England to England's special honour and credit and glory. A party of American ladies were with us and I could tell that they were much impressed by our beneficent guide and instructor. They listened to him with awe and respect and laughed at his occasional humourous touches. And I myself felt pleased and proud to think that Winchester had produced a man who was at once so important and dignified and kindly and benign.

II.

THAT night I went up to the barrack square to hear the band. I passed through a quaint old historic gate the name of which I did not find out.

The band was playing an overture with the deftness and precision and delicate colour shading typical of military bands. I may be

wrong, but it seems to me that military bands are the best bands of all. They are better than the most famous concert bands. They play so much together as one. And they get an effect of temperament, a thing which a concert band rarely gets.

There were a great many people listening in the square to the music. And after the overture there came Lassen's beautiful and pathetic "Allerseelen"—"All Souls' Day." I have never heard such a rendering of the beautiful and sad music-story as I heard that night.

I came down the High Street in the darkness listening to the bugle blowing the last post. And then there came the sound of the bells of the old cathedral.

III.

THE next day found me on the way to Southampton which lay off twelve miles from Winchester. I was sorry to leave the easy old world place, but I had to be getting on.

The first man I met on the road was a French stoker. He had left his ship in Southampton and was on his way to Winchester. He told me many things that I could not understand and I performed the same dubious service for him. He had but little English and I had no French at all. He was perhaps going to pay Winchester College a visit and to take in the antiquities generally. He was doubtless a stoker who possessed the historic sense.

A good many men were coming along the road from Southampton. But they were all men of ships. I did not see a real tramp through the whole of the journey.

After I had gone about seven miles the road ran through a forest. And then it opened up into a beautiful avenue lined with big trees.

Here in this avenue I met an American. He was crossing the avenue with what turned out to be a parcel of food under his arm.

He was the nearest approach to a tramp I met during the whole of the twelve miles of the road. A man like myself with the wander-instinct.

He had fallen on hard times here in England after working his way over from New York to Southampton. He belonged to Philadelphia, a place in which I had once been, and talking to him brought back the times when I had been tramping it and roughing it generally through America.

He had wanted to see England—he had seen it—and now he had to get back again, somehow. There was hardly anything he could turn his hand to here, even if he had been ever so willing. He was strange to the country and its ways. And from what he let drop in conversation I gathered that he considered England hardly a big enough country for the scope of a tramp's easy and variable and discursive energy.

He had a square, browned, rather hard face, and we talked of America as we trudged along

together to Southampton. He had turned to accompany me at my suggestion that we should walk in together. His clothes were old and workworn. They had made him pay hard in labour for his passage in the ship.

And we made our way into Southampton —a spacious, clean-looking, modern, uninteresting town.

And—after the fashion of tramps who wander into a port—we made our way to the docks where lay the ships.

III.—TO MORETONHAMPSTEAD.

ENGLAND really is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Here in Devon, the sky is as clear and as blue and as luminous as the sky of the south of Spain. And there is not the oppressive heat.

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Exeter is a clear-aired town with a blue sky and a foreign look. The people you meet in the street are civil and obliging, with none of the abruptness and harshness of manner that is alleged to be typically English. In fact the people of the south-west of England are very nice people indeed.

This fact can't be put forth too often, and —dare I say it?—these people compare with the people of the south of Ireland in this respect.

The Devonians are especially a good people to get along with. And they are fine and healthy looking. The women are especially good to look upon. They are well formed and pleasant looking, and their complexion is as clear and as beautiful as their own blue sky.

The Devon voice falls clearly and pleasantly upon the ear. In fact, to hear the people speak

makes one realize that England after all has a graceful and musical language.

I started to walk from Exeter at three o clock in the afternoon. I was bound for Moretonhampstead which lay twelve miles off on the edge of Dartmoor. I timed myself to get there at about half-past seven which allowed three miles to the hour and a half an hour off for refreshment on the way.

The heat was most trying as I made up the long hill from St. Thomas at the bottom of High Street. But the outlook, as I gradually mounted up was wonderful. Exeter lay down beneath me, and up above me and over the distant hills the sky was clear and cloudless and blue. The air was filled with the glorious aroma of summer. And down along by the stretching road were valleys green and richly tinted and shaded. Off from me the road stretched and curved up over the hills. It was a road always going upwards. But I went along, not minding. I was going up in the midst of the air and the beauty and the light. And I passed through a village. And on I went again. Always going upwards. I was now on the up slope of the far-off hills that I had seen off from Exeter. The vital, sustaining air kept the fatigue from me. And I was going down again. And off over through a gap in the hills I could see the stretch of the great Dartmoor—a treeless wild stretch with wild hills. I was going down. And at last I was in a valley. Off from me a river ran

down over small, glistening waterfalls. My destination was now about five miles away. But it was five miles "mostly gin' th' collar" as a Devon man who was passing told me.

Through the gaps in the hills the great moor was now plainly to be seen to the south-west. And at last I had the first glimpse of Moretonhampstead. A white compact place, shining in the sun. But the road did not go in a direct line to it. It wound round and around the base of some low hills.

Here I was in the white, compact town on the edge of the moor. It lay on a plateau on the slope of the hill. A small place off out of the world with a life and character of its own. The faces of the people looked easy and tranquil of expression.

The town began and ended abruptly—as small distant towns ought to end. It was a little place of itself up in the clear Devon air. The streets ran into and out from the market place.

The hotel I stayed at was a comfortable and pleasant little hotel kept by pleasant people.

After a chop—a genuine English chop that had the flavour of the moorland about it—and a bottle of claret, I went out to view the world of Moretonhampstead. The sun had not yet set behind the hills and I walked slowly about the short streets, taking things comfortably in from behind a good cigar that the landlord of the hotel had especially recommended. I was

dusty and rough looking and my face was burned with the sun, but I felt all right.

As I lounged easily about, a band broke out on the air with a startling discordance. At first I thought it was a Salvation Army band, but it turned out to be an awful German band that was making the town hideous.

The Germans are supposed to be a musical people, but I must say that the strolling bands they send over here hardly bear out the supposition. Why the English endure them I don't know. Surely we have wandering vagrants of our own who can play as well—or as badly—as these alien dodgers of military service.

Here they were destroying the poetry of the beautiful little town with their dreadful discordance.

And I finished my cigar wondering why they were allowed up here at all.

IV.—OVER DARTMOOR.

I.

In going from Moretonhampstead—"the town on the Moor"—to Princetown I went out of my way through taking the advice of the landlord of the hotel as to a short cut. Short cuts for a stranger in a strange country usually turn out to be long cuts. It is always well to stick to the high road.

The landlord told me of a path to follow which would bring me over the moor at once expeditiously and without effort, and at the same time would skirt the remains of several Druid villages of profound antiquity. I must confess that the prospect of the seeing of the extinct Druid villages enticed me but little—lacking as I do the historic sense—but the thought of getting over the moor on a dreadfully hot day without effort allured me from the path of virtue—the high road—with the result that I added at least three miles to the fourteen that lay between Moretonhampstead and Princetown. However, I forgive the landlord.

I did not carry my knapsack. I had sent it along on the coach to Princetown. One's own weight even was too much to carry on such a day.

When I did at last find myself on the high road of the moor things turned out fairly well. A gentle breeze tempered the heat.

Whether it was so or not I don't know, but the road seemed to lie up on the highest part of the moor. It wound off and along and around for miles and miles dominating the wildness and loneliness. It was as if it were living. A long, stretching, white road shining in the brilliance of the sun.

The moor was full of sound and life. I was in a world outside the sway of the reign of man. Man had built the white, shining, stretching road—and the road here was over all—but it was as if it were now a thing outside and greater than the builders of it. How small was a man as he went slowly along it.

The moor gave the effect of a place that had once been a plain. In it were immense sweeps and hollows and great stretching rises the tops of which were crowned with vast rock formations. The tors. It was as if this moor were once a dead level plain and as if it had risen up in innumerable places from the sudden working of a seismic convulsion. The plain had been rived up, but it had not broken. It had held its surface as the ocean would hold its surface as it blenched and rose under a sudden burst of wind. But these land waves were mightier than any waves of the ocean. And they had been struck suddenly to stillness as the under power had riven them.

This was the impression the great moor brought to the mind. As if it were a plain that had suddenly been disturbed and riven up and that still had kept its surface unbroken in the convulsion—and as if it had been struck to stillness in the very throe of the convulsion.

A place strange and primal and giving forth a sense of unbroken vastness. A place over which a road reigned—a long white road that shone in the brilliance of the sun.

The air was pure and strangely clear. An air invigorating and refreshing and exhilarating. It tempered the heat of the sun of the day.

Off from the road were the stone circles—irregular circles of stone that had been laid out by the men of England when they worshipped the glowing, life-giving sun-god. Within these sacred circles had stood the invokers of the light of the day.

II.

I HAD walked six miles to the south-west and here was the lonely inn to the right of the road on the moor. I went in and sat down, and soon I was talking over good Devon ale to a burly, blue-eyed farmer who had come to quench his thirst and take his ease at the inn. He had always lived on the moor and there was something in the look of his eyes such as one sees in the eyes of the men who sail the oceans in ships. In them was pictured the vagueness

and the mystery of the great, rolling moor. Men are as the places wherein they live.

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Here was an old primitive bridge of great flat stones over the Dart. I was now some way along the road from the inn and I was standing on this bridge of great flat stones. The Britons had built this bridge for the passing of their war chariots over the river. It was simply made and it had the power and lasting strength of simplicity. Just great flat stones resting on supports of stones rising out of the water and fitted deftly one over and one into the other.

And over this bridge the men who worshipped the sun had gone forth to war. Over it they had gone to fight the dread legions of mighty Rome.

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Higher and higher up lifted the road over the moor. And the sun fell more and more to the west and the heat began to pass out of the clear air. And the great moor was flooded with gold and the stretching road beyond began to lose its sharp, hard line. It still stood out clearly but a softness had come into its line.

The larks sang in the blue clearness up above the moor. And it seemed to me as if their notes were strangely full and round. In their song was the joy of the day with a mysterious fulness and roundness.

No sense of weariness came upon one in walking. The air of the moor was clear and bracing and sustaining. It brought vigour as one stepped along. And the vagueness and sense of great distance that the moor gave out rested the eye. It was as if one were looking out upon the mystery of the ocean.

Here by the road lay a deserted house. A gabled, strange house. Why had the people gone from it? I wondered over it as I passed along. Was it that the mystery and the solemnness of the great moor had in the end overborne them? It stood by the road that was again taking a sweep upwards. A deserted house.

In the distance appeared a turret. Gradually it rose above the brow of a hill. I was nearing my destination. And then the turret was lost as the road turned. I watched it as it went slowly out of sight.

Here again was the Dart—the winding river of the moor. It was going as it had gone before the coming of man. A winding river.

And there came through the air the toll of a bell. It carried clearly through the distance. And it was gone. And it came again. It sounded softly and clearly, but there was in it a mysterious suggestion. As if some menace lay behind its tone.

And as I walked along the road, which still wound upwards, the greyness of twilight began slowly to settle over the face of the great moor.

V.—"PARCERE SUBJECTIS."

I.

OVER the dread stone archway is inscribed the noble and merciful Latin motto exhorting those who have the upper hand, those who have conquered, to spare the vanquished and the fallen. "Parcere subjectis." The motto was inscribed upon the terrible archway a hundred years ago during the Napoleonic wars by men who had been vanquished and captured and who had languished here in captivity. They realized, as only the vanquished may realize, that between them and their conquerors there was no difference but a difference of degree that might be bridged. The conqueror of to-day was but the fallen of to-morrow. The victor's crown was at best but a thing of bay leaves —a thing that perished.

And a hundred years had gone and still the noble and merciful Latin motto was showing over this archway in the light. It still stood out clearly and sharply, but it was as if the soul of the motto had gone—as if it had faded away. For it meant nothing to the prisoners who now entered under the dread archway. Society, with whom they had fought, had decreed that there was to be no mercy for them. Society had decreed that vengeance was to be exacted

against them a hundred fold. Society had become more ruthless and vengeful even than those who carried out the dictum of the terrible law of the Jews—those who exacted an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. And so the Latin motto had become but a thing that mocked the unfortunate prisoner who entered beneath it.

It was as a mocking inscription over the gate of Hell.

II.

AND it lay here over Dartmoor Prison. One of the world's most horrible and dreadful prisons where the lives and the souls of men were tortured and crushed. This place where the divinity of man was degraded and trampled upon. "Parcere subjectis." The motto had now become a sneering and dreadful thing that mocked fallen and unfortunate men who entered this dread place of torture. In the prisons of old the bones of men were crushed on the rack. But here in this hideous place a worse fate even than this was in store for the fallen. Out of them was crushed all semblance of humanity by torturers with sinister faces. They were put into a horrible machine-system which crushed the humanity out of them. For the torture here in this Dartmoor was the subtlest and most cruel of all prison tortures. It was aimed to degrade and kill the mind.

Well would it have been for these unfor-

tunate men could they have escaped to the most dread prison of Siberia, for in the most dread Russian prison the fallen were at least treated as though they had once been men. But here in this English torture-house men were treated as though the time had never been that they had been men.

They were but numbers who were condemned to a dread and eternal silence.

Let us have the thing straight. It is now common knowledge that the English prison system is the most cruel and relentless and degrading in the world. The less said about Siberia the better. And here I will speak of one of the worst features of our prison system. I refer to the ticket of leave. When a man is let out he is kept under the eye and the surveillance of the police who in the main act brutally towards him and in effect blackmail him. He gets no chance, and so he finds his way back to the house of torture and degradation. The ticket of leave system should be stopped. If a man earns a remission of his sentence in the name of mercy let him really have it. Don't let him be dogged and blackmailed by the police, as he is now. Either keep him in prison, or set him free. Do one or the other. It is the ticket of leave system that mainly sends men back again to the house of torture.

To add to the shame of the unfortunate men in Dartmoor their photographs were sold to the public in the shops of Princetown. They

were photographed in their convict dress as they marched in and out of the prison. And so it was therefore possible for a man to be identified years after his sentence when he was trying to lead a different life. And the Post Office allowed the photographs of the unfortunate men to be printed on open post-cards and carried through the mails.

Why did the governor of this prison allow this scandal to go on? Why did he allow the photographs of these unfortunate men to be sold to the public in Princetown? Why did the Post Office allow these post cards to go through the mails?

What was the conception that this Governor of Dartmoor had of his dreadful duties? Surely vengeance enough was done upon these men without their shame and degradation being brought up against them in after years.

III.

A TIME will come when these torture-houses will be looked upon with the horror that we now look upon cannibalism and the burning at the stake. It is even now beginning to be seen that these places where the souls of men are branded and destroyed are in no sense deterrent. Crime is in us all and Society is beginning to see that so frightful a vengeance ought not to be exacted from those of us whom Circumstance forces to give expression to it. Society is also beginning to see that

the greatest thieves and swindlers and murderers are never punished.

A man who has committed a crime ought at the very least to be given a chance after he has been dealt with. The marks against him should be erased. He should be treated as though he had never committed the crime. It is the only way to give him a chance. Why should not a man be allowed to resume his old status ?

I wonder if there is a club in London that has the courage and the honesty and the sense of common justice sufficient to allow a man who had once been a convict to become a member of it ? Perhaps there is not at present. But there ought to be. And the time will come when there will be.

These unfortunate men who have fallen will and must get a chance.

Places like Dartmoor Prison must go. They degrade and make worse men who have fallen, and they brutalize the men who are set over them by the law to torture them. Never have I seen such dreadful and sinister faces as the faces of the warders in Princetown. They had the cruel, mean, and cowardly faces of men who practically were able to work their will safely upon helpless, unfortunate, and fallen men.

Surely this prison was but a hideous expression of an instinct to torture—an instinct grown out of a horrible and dark and obscure time in the world's life.

Surely the time had come when it might be seen that the man who had fallen was one who had at least a claim upon the help of his fellows. The time had come when the sinister mockery might well pass from the Latin motto that was inscribed over the dread stone archway of the torture-house on the great moor. It was time that the motto might express its true meaning.

" Parcere subjectis."

VI.—TO TINTAGEL.

I LISTENED to the curfew bell ringing in Launceston, an old Cornish town built up on the brow of a hill. I had got in that day from Princetown in Devon and to-morrow I was to make my way to old Tintagel where lay the ruins of the castle in which had lived King Arthur and his knights. True there was no written record that this valorous British king and his bold knights ever existed. But tradition had it so, and I must say that I have a greater respect for and belief in tradition than I have for all the written histories that were ever compiled. Written histories are mainly partizan lies written without even grace of imagination by individuals, whilst traditions are accounts by eye-witnesses cleared and rounded and, of course, polished and balanced, and passed on from generation to generation. And as I listened to the curfew bell tolling in the romantic old Cornish town the picture of King Arthur and his gallant, jovial, and carousing knights came up before me. How I would like to have sat with them at their round table which the fraternal and democratic king had caused to be made round so that no man —not even the king himself—could consider himself either above or below another man. It

struck me as I listened to the bell that the British king of old could have given many and broad points in behaviour to certain kings of the present day who try to act as if they were gods.

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The next day I found myself walking from Camelford to Tintagel Head, which lay out to the north-west some six miles.

The air above was filled with a light mist that came from the ocean beyond. It was only now and then that the sun broke through it. But the mist only enhanced the mysterious and romantic beauty of the country through which I was passing. The colour of the fields and the foliage was soft in tone with a curious under suggestion of vividness—as if vivid colours might suddenly spring out from it. And the day was warm and had in it a languor.

This Cornwall did not seem to be like England at all. It was as if it were some place of the far south clothed in a light ocean mist.

Each county of England has an aspect and a character of its own. The difference between them may be impossible to describe, but it exists nevertheless. It comes to the mind by the way of vague impressions as one walks through them. In walking the subtle difference of landscape expression has time to impress itself upon the mind. To travel quickly is to miss it. You must go slowly.

There must have been some reason other than the mere naming of lands by dispossessors

and conquerors for the different names of the English counties. The name must have expressed some character or quality of the land that our modern senses are too blunted to perceive.

Cornwall adjoined Devon but it was in no sense Devon, though Devon like Cornwall gave forth a suggestion of the far south.

Cornwall gave out a sense of romance dim and mysterious and strange. A magically beautiful land held within the power of some far-off ancient spell. A land of subtle wizardry.

I went along the strange and narrow lane which at times passed through old slate walls that had been erected so as to stay the earth from falling in upon the lane. And I passed through a village with a curiously sounded name. And I went on and up the rise of a hill and there suddenly stretched out the ocean before me. The mist was rising from it and the sun was piercing far out along upon it.

And now the strangeness of Cornwall was in a sense clear to me, for Cornwall was a beautiful land of the ocean. Stealing over it was the full ocean softness, and the full ocean strangeness and mystery. Surely the time had been when ocean monsters had come up from the great water on the land. And the men of old had fought them. Cornwall was the land of a profound dim time when dragons and monsters and mighty men

and wizards lived—wizards who made potions and wove spells and possessed powers which the men of our time were beginning but faintly to understand and to grasp. Surely these traditions and legends were but the faint echoes coming from a time when the men of the world possessed supernal powers which gave them dominion over secret, world forces. Surely was this mystic Cornwall a place where men had dwelt before the Fall.

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I was walking now through Trevenna. And I passed through the village and went along by the edge of the vast ocean from whence came the light mist that covered the land. How foreign of look were the people of Trevenna. They looked as people from the south, but as no people from the south as we know it now. Some old, dark-skinned race with clear dark eyes who spoke English in a strange, flat, foreign-sounding way.

And here at last loomed before me the vast rock of Tintagel.

Tintagel. How sonorous and wonderful and magical of sound was the name.

I climbed high up on the rock where lay the broken castle where had lived the mighty Arthur and his knights. May it not have been that these men of old were the last of those who were dowered with the full powers that will come again to man after he has groped his way through the present darkness ?

For Arthur at his death had been borne away in mystical fashion. When his magic sword, Excalibur, had been thrown into the lake the maidens had guided him in his deep sleep to Avalon. For the time was to come when the mighty king was to rise again.

How beautiful and significant was the legend.

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And I was on this great rock that stood as a sentinel here at the break of the waves of the vast ocean. Yonder lay the mighty and broken castle of old.

Far down beneath me broke the waves. The vast, low ocean voice came upward. And the mist lifted and the sun was suddenly shining down upon the sands. And the mist lifted further and the sun reached forth and illumed the mighty and broken castle of old. A cloud had settled above it, but now the cloud was gone. And the sky above the broken castle came to a strange clear blue. And the sun came fuller and stronger.

And the mist lifted again further and the sun came out to its fullest, illumining with an immense shining the rock of Tintagel.

OUTSIDE PICTURES.



I.—THE LIFE OUTSIDE.

I.

In the life outside the senses of man become quickened and alert. Powers that have been buried within him arise and become vital. He gets to be more of a man. And as he begins to glow with the might of a coming perfect health he finds his brain becoming saner and stronger.

Perfect health means perfect balance of all man's organs and powers. And this most precious jewel lies within the grasp of all who have freedom of movement. It lies within the grasp of all those who are not chained to desks, or chained down to the darkness of cells, or chained to the mania for the getting of gold.

Remember this. The condition of perfect health is growth to the tune of an absolute balance. It is the law of absolute balance that has kept the suns and the worlds swinging through millions of years. And this is the one law that man may not break. For man is a wondrous being who contains within him the essence of the laws and the powers of the swinging worlds. He is of rock, of air, of water, of fire. A magical and mysterious being of harmony.

And so he must therefore go out to the

elements from whence he came when this harmony, which is the key of his life condition, is disturbed by the discordant life of the town. He must go out into the open air of the wide lands and the waters. He must listen to the spirit of the wind as it voices through the trees of the forest. He must go afoot in the midst of storms.

Let him not be afraid of the elements from whence he came, for from them he will get a renewal of the life force. From them he will get balance. And the absolute harmony will come to him.

The life outside. That is the only real life. Towns are places of half dark cells, places of disease mental and physical. They talk of palaces. What palace is to be compared to the arching shelter of great trees stretching their branches and meeting other great trees? What roof is so beautiful as the glimpses of sky through the leaves high overhead?

I say this:—If man were to sleep out in the open instead of the big or little cell-places called houses a most glorious health would come to him. I have slept out in the open and I know whereof I speak. When the body is resting, then is the time it should have the clean fresh air to inhale so that it may get back again to the full its power lost through the life of the day.

There is no fresh air in houses. There is no fresh air in towns, and so it is that men are ill and that their powers and organs become

unbalanced. And an early death stops a life that has never been aught but half a life.

Get out to the life outside.

II.

How wonderful are the songs of the birds in the life outside. I have often wondered why they sing through the long hours of the day. Surely there is some reason for this that is not given to the mind of man to grasp. Surely it may be that the bird songs in some way make for the absolute balance of harmony that is the life of the world. Surely there is a reason for the lark's joyous and thrilling note. Often have I gone along and wondered about this. The lark soars and soars, singing. And he is gone up aloft from the eye, but still his joyous song rings out clear.

All the songs of the birds. There is something behind them. They fulfil a mysterious mission in the great law of absolute harmony that is the life of the world.

III.

To feel the press of the wind as one lives in the life outside! There is in it a magic of health and strength. And so there is in the soft touch of the rain. Be not afraid of the rain. It will harm you not as you go forth.

How fine it is to swim in the waters. To feel the touch of this element against you as

you cleave along. Cleaving along in rough, tumbling waves. It is fine to feel the press of the waves against your breast. You are dashed hither and thither. But still you are king here in this element. How magical to cleave your way through the dash and the press of the shouting waters.

I have gone out and swum in a storm. Swum when the wind tore and tumbled the water from the north-west. I was at once beaten down and dashed about, but still I held the poise of myself.

Go out, man, and swim in the storm waters. Fight in the midst of the roar of the wind and the hurtle and dash of the water-tumult.

And life that is life will be given you.

IV.

SAIL forth over the waters on ships. Inhale the great salt wind. Listen to the song of the sailors as they pull on the ropes. Go round with them and pull on the ropes yourself. Join in the song of the sailors as you brace your feet strongly on the deck and pull with all the heft that is in you on the halyard. Look up at the beautiful sail as it rises from the yard above and fills out gracefully with the swell of the wind.

Go for a long, long voyage round the Horn on a sailing ship. On your way you will see mighty glowing pictures of wonder.

The vast water-world outside is truly a

world of wonder. It is far stranger than the tales told of it by men. As you go over it day by day, day by day, its mystery will reveal itself to you. You will learn to love the wide, ever-changing waters. You will love the great storms even though a fear comes to you from their midst. You will love the growl and the rumble of the thunder.

You will admire the quick splendour of the lightning as it hurtles and flashes in the heavens.

* * * * * *

And how glorious will be the shine of the sun. And the life-giving warmth. You will stand on deck in the clear light-magic of the moon. You will look up to the stars. On and on you will go in this ship of sails. And you will feel the steady, steady press of the great trade wind. You will hear the voice, gentle and strong, of the great wind-god speaking through the masts and spars and ropes.

Go out for a long voyage on a ship of sails.

V.

THE life outside is the only life. It is the only life wherein there is absolute balance and harmony. Men do not grow in the great towns. And the time will come to pass when these places of hurry and darkness will pass away. Man will live more in the open. He will go back to the healthful primal conditions in the midst of which he lived in the beginning. For

man is essentially an animal of the open air. The powers that are within him were slowly gathered through the living of countless ages in the open. For a long time he has lived in towns and he has learned less than nothing. His paltry inventions have only added to his misery and his lassitude.

He must go back to the life outside.

II.—THE WIND.

I

A MAN must have followed the sea and have travelled through great mountain chains and over immense plains to know something of the ways of the wind. He must have faced its power on the heaving deck in the lone ocean. He must have grappled with it on the tops of mountains, and have bent before it as it hurtled over the plain. If he has done this he will have grown to love the power and the wildness of the wind. He will have grown to love its immense buffets, for he will have grasped the secret that its hurtle and stroke gives power to the man who is strong.

It is not given to the dwellers in towns to know of the true power and glory and majesty of the wind. Neither is it given to them to know of its beauty and softness. For there are times when the wind speaks with a voice gentle and strange. There are times when it soothes and charms. Times when it organs forth strange music. But the dwellers in the towns know not of this. For them the wind is dead—or it lives but at rare times when it comes forth and strikes mightily the town. And so they fear the wind, for they know of it but in its times of vengeance.

The wind is the mysterious spirit that reigns over the lone ocean. It raises up the mighty waters at its will. It storms and rages and sweeps out vastly. An illimitable, uncontrollable spirit. It hurls ships into the depths.

And its anger passes. And now it sends ships steadily along. It sends them through the day and through the night. Gently and steadily it sends them till they have reached their far destination. It has become a spirit that is strong and gentle and beneficent. It is with the sailors as they lie on the decks watching the full-swelling sails.

II.

THIS mighty spirit obeys but laws of its own. For it the will of man exists not. It gives but what it chooses to give. It keeps its own secrets. It follows its own paths and goes along in its own ways. It is mighty and terrible and gentle as it wills. From pole to pole it sweeps. Circling the world.

An invisible all-power. It goes forth through the clouds. A gigantic wander-spirit.

And it is but the men who are wanderers themselves who are in accord with this great spirit. It is but the men who go over the face of the world that know it. They are free as it is free. They pass as it passes, hither and thither. It is their god. This gigantic wander-spirit. They have *met* it in all its moods. They have listened to the sound of



THE WIND.

its many voices. They have heard its stupendous voice as it spoke mightily in the storm. And they fear it not. These men who wander over the face of the world.

III.

THE wind roars upon the tops of the lofty mountains. It comes forth through the clouded crags to the lone man who wanders. It speaks mightily to him here in the midst of the desolate grandeur. Snow and great mountains and the voice of the wind. This man is facing vastness and he grows in power and strength. He looks above and there far, far up poises the motionless eagle whose piercing glance reaches him in the solitude. To the eagle has been given the secret of the laws of the wind. And the man who wanders passes in the solitude.

And a strange voice will come to him from out the voice of the wind. A voice telling him that he is at one with the grandeur and the solitude. That he is at one with the motionless eagle who glances upon him from the afar aloft. It will tell him things that he hears not from men in crowded towns. And he will pass, girded with a new strength.

Or this man is on a vast, immense plain that stretches out and around him, forming a stupendous circle against the line of the heavens. Far up above him is the hard, clear blue. He passes, and there is

no voice. Only silence. Only a vast plain bounded by a stupendous circle, and the blue, hard heavens. For days he has moved towards a point in this circle For days he has moved in the stillness.

And now there comes to him a faint voice. A voice that brings him tidings It is the voice of the wind that comes from the great mountains that lie beyond the stupendous circle. He knows the voice. For this man is one whose senses have come to their full power. To him are revealed things that are closed to the dull-sensed men of towns. He can measure distances by powers that are within himself. And he knows by what the voice of the wind tells him that the immense circle will break to-morrow.

He is glad. He presses on.

IV.

How wonderful is the wind song. It steals gently and strangely through the forest. It rises and dies away and rises again. It trembles the leaves as it comes over the tops of the trees, and it passes into the far distance. A rising and falling song of beautiful tones. A strange clear melody living above harmonies full and deep and soft.

And when the night comes there is in the song a deep, weird note. The song has changed amid the shadows and darkness. At times it strikes fear into the mind. It is the song of

ghosts and the song of death. It is as if voices were coming from those that had gone into the Unknown. Wailings and moanings are in the song of the wind as it passes through the forest in the darkness. And dread, sinister murmurings. How strange is the song of the wind at night in the forest.

And the song of the wind as it sings through the masts of the ship. How clear and steady it is. It is passing up aloft, above and under the clearly outlined full-spreading sails. It is passing around the yards and booms and braces and masts. A clear, steady song.

And how terrible is the wind-song as the sailors are out along the booms taking in the flapping, fighting sails in the rising storm. Then is the song threatening. It is a song with death in it. It is rising higher and higher as the sailors fight with the living, furious sails.

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This illimitable wander-spirit of the many voices. It goes from pole to pole, it circles the earth and ocean. It reigns alone. It is its own god. This grand and mighty wind. It drives in the heavens the strange-shaped clouds. It is the foe and the friend and the master of man. It reigns over the great, lone ocean. It has its own secrets. It goes its own paths and ways. This invisible smiter of mighty blows. This genie of the wonderful song. This mighty, uncontrollable spirit.

This wind.

III.—THE OCEAN.

I.

THE wide mysterious ocean has a strange effect upon the men who belong to it. It gives to their minds a largeness and simplicity. And a vagueness. This ocean-given thing shows in the eyes. The eyes of the men of ships are not as the eyes of other men. There is in them the mystery and wonder of the immense, slow-heaving waters. For a long time these men have gazed out over an infinite expanse. They have gazed through the night watches, through the watches of the day. They have lived in their ships in the midst of the immense, heaving loneliness. And the mystery and the wonder of it has come into their eyes.

The wonderful ocean silence that dwells behind the sound of the waters. These men have felt it as they passed on in their ships. They have felt it even when the winds tore the waters and the thunder roared and the lightning flashed. They have felt it behind the calm and behind the darkness. A tremendous stillness lying behind the ocean voice.

These men of the ocean know secrets that they may not tell.

II.

To stand on the bow of a ship and look for lights out into the darkness. It is a strange and vague experience. You are alone and standing in the front of the ship as the ship passes. Before and around you is the darkness. And far up above shine worlds. Below you is the black mystery of the ocean.

At such a time vague thoughts come to you. You feel the tremendous stillness that lies behind. You are alone, passing through an immense, dark world. The great salt wind is in your face. You are in the midst of air and darkness and water. Flying through vagueness.

Beneath you is the steady song of the water as the bow of the ship cleaves through it. And things shine in the darkness of the waves. And there strikes behind you the bell of the ship, marking the hour. But you heed not the bell of the ship. You are here alone in the dark strangeness. On watch. Time is not for you. You are here silent and still in the eye of the ship watching for lights. Strange, formless thoughts are in your mind. The soul of the vast slow-heaving ocean has entered within you. And the ship passes along. You are on watch.

III.

THE ocean dawn. It comes as you are standing on watch in the eye of the ship. A faint gray-

ness rises up from out the dark, heaving waters. And you have a sense as of sound coming to you from a great distance.

The grayness speads softly over the lone waters. And there comes a shining, piercing shaft of light that widens and spreads. The edge of the fire-world rises up from afar from out the depths of the waters. And the sense as of sound is now filling the vast loneliness. The voice of the light mingles with the voice of the heaving waters.

The break of day. How wonderful it is here on the face of the lone ocean.

The light rises and shines. The far-shining worlds of the darkness are blotted out.

The waves shine with the light of day. The fire-world is full up above the waters. A splendour is living in the heavens. The great flaming light is surrounded by a soft blue. And yonder in the blue is shining a pale, clear star. And the great, flaming light rises and the star is gone. The vast, immense ocean is lit up with the fire of day. How strangely the heaving waves shine.

You are passing through an immense, unmeasurable, shining solitude.

IV.

THE face of the ocean is ever changing. Pictures vague and wonderful appear in it and pass. Pictures of immense, strange forms. And there come upon it wonderful shadows.

And the colour of the ocean is ever changing as the ship passes. It is as if you were passing from place to place in the heaving loneliness. As if the great water held within itself many waters.

Day after day you go on in the midst of a vastness that is at once a solitude and a place that is ever changing.

V.

THE mystery and the meaning of the ocean. At last it is before you, but you may not tell of it. It is as a thing that you see far beyond you. It is revealed before you, but still it is not for you to grasp. And still you are at one with it. Here in this vast ocean are unknown things to which you respond. What they are you cannot tell. But the feeling is upon you that you are in some way in accord with them.

You have followed the ocean for a long time in ships and now this feeling is upon you. You have grown to know the dark, immense, moving waters. You have grown to understand them. And it may be that there will come into you a thing that is as the dim shadow of the shadow of a memory. Were you ever of this dark, heaving ocean? Was there ever a time when you dwelt within it?

As you look out upon the waters this feeling is upon you. A faint, inner, long hushed voice speaks within you. A voice coming from out

the dark, dim, profound time when the beings from which man came dwelt within these tremendous depths.

VI.

THE ocean in a storm. The furious wind hurls against you as you are taking in the fighting, flapping sails. And the thunder growls and rumbles and roars above. Darkness has come into the day. And the lightning flashes.

The waves rise from the ocean and bear down upon the struggling ship. Lightning, thunder, and waves. They are upon you as you battle with the sails. Fire circles terribly around you. Frightful blows fall upon the ship. Wave and wind and thunder and fire. It is as if the ship were doomed. As if she were being engulphed in the fury of the elements.

The ship on which you are battling is straining terribly. She groans beneath the tremendous ocean blows. It may be that she will be lost—that she will go down into the dark, furious depths.

And you fight here on the ship—you, the man who is of the ocean. Death and terror and tumult are around you. A mast has gone. A man has gone. The immense, terrible ocean will claim the ship. You will go down into the black depths.

But you fear not. You fight on with the sails. You fear not. You are of the ocean.

You fight on.

VII.

How beautiful is the ocean in a calm. The great waters move gently and softly.

You are at the wheel and a light wind is in the sails. You are steering the ship as she goes gently along.

The immense loneliness of the ocean is softened. A peace is upon it. And a silence.

You watch the sails as the ship goes steadily and gently along. It is towards the end of the day and the sun is going down.

And the vast expanse of waters is lit up with a glow of gold. The ship is bearing gently on before the light wind.

How beautiful then is the ocean.

IV.—THE LIFE OF THE DAY.

I.

THE stars glisten through the dark far depths of the heavens, and the moon shines as it slowly sails across calm seas of deep, dark blue and again behind clouds of strangely changing shapes. The moon sails and shines serenely. Off, low to the west, there is in the sky a heavy dull blackness. And there is in the air a sense of dead stillness.

Suddenly, in the east, there comes into the sky a trembling softness that changes slowly into a grayness. The birds awaken.

Voices ring out high above, and other voices join the first voices, and again there are voices, and the grayness is growing, growing, and there are more voices, and the grayness is changing to a soft whiteness that is springing up into the sky in far-arching bending shafts, spreading shafts that are blotting out the glisten of the far stars. Up and up come the shafts of light from the east. They are growing and growing. And the song of the birds swells out and out. And the moon that is sailing in the heavens becomes dim and pale.

Here is dawn. Here is the birth of the life of the day.

II.

Now the light is coming up from the east in a wonderful, pouring, stupendous, illimitable flood. Pouring, pouring into the sky till even in the far, low west there is no darkness. And the stars are gone. And the moon is gone. And there is in the air the tremor of wakefulness.

III.

THERE comes up slowly in the east from behind the flood of soft whiteness a light of a pale faint mysterious blue. It spreads and spreads filling the sky in the east. Though it moves there is about it an effect of stillness. A light of a pale faint mysterious blue. In it is a wonderful, far off, unheard music. And the faint blue changes to a still fainter green. And then there come in the east soft pink clouds, as wings on wings. And the pink becomes deeper and deeper and suddenly there is a burst and a glow of gold. And here is the edge of the sun. Up and up it comes till it stands full over the edge of the world.

Here is the day.

IV.

THE green grasses of the fields, and the trees, and the flowers welcome the day. And from the larks there comes forth a still more wonderful song. The dew glistens on the grasses and on the leaves of the trees, and the flowers

open their buds to the caress of the light. How joyful and wonderful is the morning of the day. The great golden orb brings light and life and fulfilment.

And now men come slowly along. They are coming to work in the fields. They come from near by, from yonder, from many directions. Men who are to work through the life of the day.

V.

THE sun is pouring forth a flood of softly warm light. The day has well begun for all. For the men in the fields, for the birds, for the trees, for the flowers. For all life. Insects buzz and fly around, bees go from flower to flower, and the ants run to and fro and carry and build. The hum of life sounds strong through the worlds that are within the worlds. And the sun rises higher and higher above all —the sun that gives life to all the beings that dwell within all these worlds.

VI.

How wonderful are the calm, strangely-shaping clouds. They sail and change, and appear and disappear, and weave and unweave, and form themselves into mountains and mysterious vast shapes. Now they are mighty horses drawing chariots in which sit gods. Now they are wonderful, magical, shining cities. Now they are illimitable steps

mounting to a far, far throne. Now they part and disclose the void of the far blue. And they join again and form themselves into strange lands. And into strange, vast, interweaving forests. Now they are ranged as great air armies. And from out them emerges a war god. And the armies change and are dissolved. Changing ever changing. Weaving ever weaving. How wonderful are the clouds.

VII.

HERE is the middle of the day. The rays of the sun are pouring down full and strong. They pour down upon the heads of the men who are working in the fields. The men who are working through the life of the day. The sun is now a white-burning, thrusting, piercing, shaft of light that would burn and sear the eye that looked upon it. Here is the fulness and the power and the glory and the majesty of the life of the day. Here is the clear-burning, beneficent, magical life-fire. The fire that has called into being the worlds and the worlds within the worlds. The soft, glorious, sacred fire of day.

VIII.

THE sun now moves high up in the heavens, a stupendous orb living in fire. A dazzling white fire. Around the circle of the dazzle of light is a faint blue and beyond this the sky is a deeper blue. And upon the life of the

earth and the fields and the trees there comes a quietude. The animals lie down to rest through the heat and the songs of the birds do not give forth the surrounding, all-ringing jubilance that they gave forth at the birth of the life of the day. Into the life of the earth there comes a desire for rest. The men who are at work in the fields work more slowly. The still glare of the sun reigns supreme.

IX.

THE sun is now going down in the heavens. Its light is losing its hard glare. Upon it is coming a softness. And the shadows from the trees are growing longer. The workers in the fields now look up towards the sun as it bears slowly down in the heavens. The heat of the day is wearing down.

X.

A ROUND golden softness is now in the light of the great orb. This softness is lying over all:—over the trees and the fields and over the workers. Everything looks golden in the light. Even the greens of the leaves of the trees have taken upon them a golden tinge. And there comes from the distance the low sound of the voice of the slight-stirring wind. The voice comes and comes and at last the slight-stirring cool wind is with the workers

in the fields. They stand erect and look up towards the sun that is sailing slowly down in the heavens to the west.

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And now from the west is pouring an infinite volume of yellow-gold light. A wonderful, transfiguring softness is covering the earth. And far above the transfiguring gold in the west is a calm, clear-shining blue. And into the blue there softly blends colour upon colour. And now the rays of the sun stretch up and the whole is an illimitable blaze of gold. And the sun is again standing on the edge of the world. The life of the day is near to the end.

XI.

THE sun has gone down in a blaze of strange glory. And over all there is a hush of silence. It is the end of the life of the day. And the colours above the glow are softly fading away. And yonder is the clear silver shine of a star.

V.—OUR PARK.

WHEN the day is hot and close and sultry we quietly saunter through the quaint old village and turn up to the left through a road that winds along by the side of a river. And then we turn to the right and enter through the little, swinging wooden gate which leads into our park. And as we go along the path which goes up the gently ascending slope, we see the deer quietly browsing. Some of them raise their heads and look at us as we pass along. These lithe, beautiful, quick-moving deer. They are neither afraid of the sound of our voices or the sound of our steps.

And here is a great tree which crowns the head of the gently ascending slope. We sit under it and listen to the song of the cool wind as it is sweeping overhead through the branches and the leaves. How cool it is here. And the heat of the village is forgotten. And we sit in the shade and dream and look out at the glare of the sun in the spaces beyond. How beautiful and cool and refreshing is the green of the grass.

Here in our park.

For it is indeed our park even though the title deeds that are said to belong to it are locked away in the possession of my lord. We are free to come and go and pass and repass,

and to look out upon the cool green of the grass, and to listen to the wind song in the trees. And we own our right through no word of my lord. It is ours by inheritance. Ours from a time gone by hundreds of years. The feet of a free people had worn a path through it long before the title deeds of my lord had come into being.

And so it is our park.

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Our park has many different and strange moods. It is alive as we are alive. There are days when the sky above it is hard and gray and overcast and sullen. And at these times there is in the park a curious quietude. A stillness is upon its many sided life. The great trees wear a sombre and strange air. There is then in the park a sense of mystery and a sense of threatening.

Again there are days when the park is full of a wonderful glory. And again there are magical days the beauty of which no one can describe. And there are days that are strangely blue. Exultant days of blue beauty.

The green grass waves and shakes and quivers and bends under the cool wind. The bright yellow flowers move and nod and the branches of the trees gently swing and bend.

High, high above from out the heavens there comes a voice clear and ringing and strangely sonorous. It is a small voice and still it fills the whole park with sound. There

is in it a vaster and nobler meaning than there is in the most beautiful human voice. The song of the lark. A thrilling, clear, exulting, hopeful song. It lifts and enthrals. There is in it the joy and the fulness and the wonder and the meaning of life. It is so far away up in the heavens. It is as if it were coming from some more glorious world. A song of gladness. It rings and rings and then it is silent. And then the song breaks forth again from another place in the heavens. A joyful, wonderful song. The song of the lark.

How delicious and fragrant is the smell of the earth and the flowers and the grasses and the great-spreading trees. It heals and soothes the mind and the senses. A wonderful balm, And how cool and fresh is the greenness here under the branches of this oak. This oak that was here long, long before we came, and that will be here long, long after we have gone. This great spreading mighty symbol of power and calm and silent endurance. This oak that has lived through the fret and storm and hoar and frost of the winters of centuries —that has lived through the sunlight and the darkness and the snow and hail and rain :— this wise, strong, silent, mighty oak.

In this park there is at once a sense of quietude and silence and rest, and a sense of a life that is myriad-fold. Here are worlds by the side of worlds, and worlds within worlds. A vast, inscrutable, mysterious life within life. Teeming myriads of creatures with ordered

laws. Creatures dowered with powers of speech, varied and mysterious and wonderful. Dowered with a sure knowledge gleaned from the experience of thousands upon thousands of years. Strange, myriad-peopled worlds within worlds.

The life of the leaves. As you look up into the great oak you see them stirring and moving and waving. Now they are golden as the glint of the sun catches them. Now they are pale green. Now they are dark green. Now they are dark. They are ever being shaken and moved and stirred by the wind. A wonderful tangle of dancing leaves. Their waving and rustling and moving make a soft, low, hushing music. You can hear it off in the distance. You can hear it coming, coming and swelling out. And you hear it hushing and dying off again into the distance.

How strange and varied are the shapes of the leaves. To look up into them is as if one were looking upon all the faces of all the people of some wonderful, deep, curious green world. This world of leaves. This world of strange rustling voices.

In the distance the branches of the trees bring to mind the great stone arches that sweep up from out the columns of a cathedral. It was from the trees that man first got his idea of the building of wonderful enduring edifices. Man first worshipped God beneath the green arches of mighty trees. God first spoke to him through the voices of the leaves as the wind stirred and moved them.

The rays of the sun are now sloping and they sink as shafts of gold into the green arches of the distance beyond. The heat of the day is dying down, and stillness is coming into the air. Into the clear brightness of the day there has come a tinge of softness. And white, fleecy calm clouds are arising.

And the sun comes lower and lower in the heavens. And now a soft grayness is gently spreading over the whole of the sky. And the air becomes cooler still.

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Here is the evening. The sky to the west is now filled with a glow of gold. And the glow becomes deeper and deeper in hue till at last it has changed to a soft redness. And the fleecy, calm clouds above are losing their whiteness. And again there comes the song of the lark. And the sun is gone. And high up yonder is a pale wisp of a gray moon. And the night voices begin to sound softly in the park. The shadows have become long and dim and indistinct. And they are merging one into the other. And the time goes on and on and at last there is in the sky a half darkness. The shadows are now all merged, and in the distance they stretch up and up till they seem to touch the edge of the clouds, which are now dark. And the night voices are now sounding strongly. Into the heavens there comes the gleam of far worlds, and a faint, soft whisper comes from the leaves.

VI.—SOUNDS OF BELLS.

I.

I LOVE the sounds of old church bells pealing through a distance in the clear air. There is in them at once mystery and sympathy, and at times a sadness. These bells are the voices of prayer and meditation. And the voices of faith and hope. You are lifted as you hear them.

It may be that you have come from a far way off, and that you are tired with the march of the day. The sounds of the bells then as they come to you through the distance will lighten your weariness. Or it may be that you are one within whom hope is dead—that you are one who is as lost. Then will the sounds of the bells come to you as a welcome. You have been dispirited as you have been going along over the weary, lone road. And here are the bells ringing for you as they would ring for the mightiest king. And so your steps become firm as you go along, even though it be close to the end of the day. After all, life holds much the same for you as it holds for any man. Do not these old, clear-sounding, soft-sounding bells tell you so? Do they not bear to you a message that thrills you?

And the pictures of the past that they bring up before you. You look through their soft,

clear, voicing magic back to the old years when your life was not what it is now. And the sight of these old years does not sadden you. You do not grieve as you look upon these pictures of the long ago. For the pictures are haloed with the magic of the distant-sounding bells.

And not only do pictures of the past come to you. To you there comes a revealing of the future. Here are pictures wherein you see yourself as you will be when the clouds that have hung around you so long have broken.

Beautiful magic of the sounds of the old church bells coming through a distance in the clear air! Often have you cheered me as I went along alone and forlorn! For there are times when sadness comes upon the one who is held by the wander-spirit.

Old bells. For me there is nothing in the whole wide world that holds so rare and strange a charm.

II.

BELLS of the sea. They sound through the watches of the day and through the watches of the night, over the ships that move on the great, lone waters. They sound through the clear night as the sailors lie watchful on the decks under the shadows of the sails. Their voices ring out through the sharp stroke of hurling winds. They pierce clearly through the roar and thunder of storms. They sound out as the sailors lie in peace in the fo'castles.

Their sounds rise up about the men of the sea as they are up aloft taking in the sails.

Over all the seas and over all the oceans are ships going to the sounds of bells. The produce of the world, the wealth of the world, is carried hither and thither over the vast, far, heaving waters under the ægis of this sound-magic. Often have I thought of the bells of all the moving ships of the world. They speak with the one voice to the many-nationed sailors —to the turbaned lascar, to the fair-haired sailor of the North, to the swarth-faced sailor of the South, to the sailors of the strange faces who come from the mysterious East. Through the day and through the night speak the bells of the myriad, countless ships. Through storm and sun and shine and ice and snow and driving winds. How wonderful are these countless, moving voices that always are speaking to the men of the ships.

Bells of the sea.

III.

THE deep, sonorous sounds of the bells of death. They sound out through the great, busy, wide-stretching towns when those that are of import to the world go forth on their last journey. They sound out when to death has gone a king. Through the air goes the low, deep tones, telling of the end that comes to all. These strange, slow bells of death. These solemn voices.

And the bells that tell of the laying down

of arms in a great and mighty war. The bells of peace that tell of the staying of a long strife. How magical and restful are these sounds. How grateful they are to those that hear. For now the time has come to pass when men may go forth without fear upon their avocations. For them there is no dread of the morrow. Hearts are lifted in thankfulness. Men grasp the hands of men, for chained and silent is the demon of war. The head of hate is covered with forgetfulness. The reign of discord has come to an end.

Sounds of the bells of peace. Bells of fraternity and fellowship. Out, out they ring, bringing gladness into the faces of men. And from the far fields of war will come home the gaunt soldiers.

But, alas! These bells of peace are also bells of death. For the sounds reach to the mother as she sits by the stricken hearth, thinking of the boy who will never again come home. Sad, sad bells of peace. Your voices come to the lone woman whose man is dead. Your voices come to the child.

Sad, sad bells of peace. Would that your tones were never to fall to silence. Would that you might always ring.

IV.

THE joyful, ringing, pealing, gladsome wedding bells. How their sounds fill and fill the air. And in these sounds are strange fore-

tellings, for these bells that ring out so joyously possess deep under them the secret of the future. These ringing, pealing, joyous bells are the bells of futurity. Listen, and in them you will hear the voice of the Sibyl. This voice is telling what will come to pass in the future, but it is not given to you to read the telling.

But also these bells hold within them the strange and fine joy of promise. These wedding bells are ringing forth for the morrow, and thus it is that they are joyful over all other bells, for to-morrow is of all days the day. May we not grasp to-morrow what we grasp not to-day?

These bells of the future fine and strange. How they peal forth.

Inscrutable bells of futurity. Bells of joy and mystery and prophecy. Ringing, gladsome, pealing bells, telling of the morrow. Weaving meanings in the air that may not be read.

Sounds of the bells telling of the time to come.

V.

BELLS ringing in the dawn of a year. How joyously they ring out over the town. Myriads and myriads of bells mingle their sounds in the air. And joyous human voices arise in song. Here is the new year. Here is the year laden with promise. And the bells ring out and out, and lo! the bells of the villages are ringing out even as the bells of the great

town. Old church bells are ringing out over stretching fields welcoming the coming of the year. The bells are pealing over the whole land. Town, village, and lonely distant place are filled with the joyous sound of bells. They ring on and on and on. They are ringing all together over our England. The sounds have been caught up and up and passed on and on.

England is a-joy with the sound of bells.

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These magical world-voices. For me they are of all voices the voices I most love. Often have I listened to them as I passed on, under the spell of the wander-spirit. Often have they uplifted me when I felt sad.

Magical sounds of hope and joy and life and death and promise and prophecy. How they peal. How they ring. Ringing in all places. Coming forth from near and far. Ushering out and ushering in. Telling of the future and the past. Ever coming. Ever going.

Glorious are the sounds of bells.

VII.—THE INN BY THE WAYSIDE.

It has a great fireplace, and a chimney that goes up narrowing and narrowing till at the top the sharp light of the sky above is seen through a chink.

And in the corner of the fireplace there is a hob-like seat, where one may sit down and watch the play of the flames. The inn is only twenty miles away from the roar and the boom of the mystery of London, but, as far as you are concerned, it might be thousands upon thousands of miles off. Nay, London might be off in some other world. As you sit here in the corner of the great fireplace, you think of it, if you think of it at all, as some immense, confused place seen years ago in a dim dream. For you London is dead. Its roar is stilled. It is gone. Here before you is the great fireplace of the old inn. Here are the strange, flickering, dying, and rising flames. You are dreaming in the old inn.

The landlord brings you ale. How delicious is the flavour. Where is the wine that is to be compared with it? This good, honest ale. You take a drink from the mug. Its flavour is at once soft and sharp—and enclosing this flavour is an aroma not to be described. You

drink deep. And then you set the mug slowly down. Ah, here is an after-flavour. How delicious it is. Fine, old toasty ale! Perhaps you will give the ale that title to yourself. Old toasty ale! It is worth all the wine you have ever tasted. Perhaps you are one who has travelled. Perhaps you are one who has roughed it, one who has smoothed it here and there. You may have travelled over the oceans and over the world, but I defy you to say that you have ever drunk anything half so good as this ale. This good, old delicious ale out of a mug! It would not do to drink it out of a glass. The essence of its flavour would then be gone. You must drink it out of a mug.

The landlord comes to talk to you. For a while he interests you, and then your thoughts go off. This strange old inn is a place for one to dream in.

What is that you hear? It comes to you clearly and distinctly as you sit here by the fire. A clear, far-off rising note. Yes, it is a lark. Its song comes to you as you sit here by the fire. The inn is now silent and quiet. The landlord has left you. You are alone, and listening to the outside wonderful song. The song rises and rises, and dies away, and rises again. You hear the undernote, and the glorious, thrilling song. How quiet the inn is. The song comes nearer and nearer and then it goes off. And off. And it dies faintly away.

II.

HERE is the great rough table where the labourers sit when they come to the inn in the evening to get their ale. And here are the benches. Over yonder on the wall is the target with hooks at which they play the game of rings. They stand off and pitch rubber rings on to the hooks.

It is now five o'clock in the afternoon. They will be here in an hour. Perhaps you will wait and see them.

You go to the door of the inn and look out. The sun is shining full along the straight country road. Afar away down on the left side of the road are to be seen the tops of the trees in the great undulating park. You saw the deer browsing in it as you walked up the road something over an hour ago. And over there is the little village church. And behind it is an ivy-clad cottage.

And up on the other side of the road, from the church the houses of the village stretch. Smoke wreathes softly from the chimneys. Off in front of you is a great field. A man is working at the far end with a horse and plough. He is ploughing slowly along in the shadows that are cast by great trees. He goes slowly along till at last he emerges from the shadows into the golden light of the sun. Horse, plough, and man. They are doing some of the real work of the world.

A light wind is blowing. There is in it a

touch of cold, but it is pleasant. You go back into the inn and sit by the fire.

III.

SIX o'clock. You seem to have been here a long time, but it is a time that you would like to go on for ever. A time of haze and dreams. You have been sitting in silence drinking and watching the flames of the fire.

The sound of the lifting of the latch of the inn door comes to you, and you hear a slow, heavy step. A man is standing at the end of the great rough table. You look at him and he looks at you, and then you look away again into the fire. With you is the picture of a sturdy, awkward-looking man. He gives to you a curious impression of colour—the colour of the earth, of clay. You hear him sit heavily down on the bench. You look at him again. His face is of a red-brown colour. His cap is of the colour of clay. His coat is of the colour of clay. He is a labourer. One who earns the only honest bread that is earned in the world. He sits, resting his arms on the great table. The day's work is done and he is tired.

Yes, give him a mug of ale, landlord. He deserves it. To-day he has done the work of a man. It is well that he should come to this old inn, and sit and rest.

Another labourer comes in. And another. And soon the space around the great table is

filled with men drinking from mugs of ale. They become warmed up and rested, and they talk and chat about what happened during their day's work. At first it is hard to understand them, because of the odd, rough way they have of pronouncing their words. Their sentences have blunt, abrupt endings and turnings. But the ear soon becomes used to their way of speaking. You are listening, after all, to good English. These labourers bring out the true genius of the language—directness and force.

The dominoes are brought out and shuffled on the table, and hands are taken in a game. Some of the men stand up and pitch the rubber rings to the hooks on the target. Conversation is now going strong. The men are no longer tired. They are enjoying themselves here in the old inn.

Hardly anything is said about politics. These men, who do real work in the world are too much below, or perhaps too much above politics. Now and then the name and the doings of some alleged great person in politics crops up, but the subject dies down almost at once.

Pipes are going and the conversation gets more lively. Rough jokes pass. And men come in and men go out.

And so it goes on till ten o'clock. Then the door is closed and the lights are put down in the old inn. And you, yourself, pass along down the country road under the light of the stars.

VIII.—WALKING IN WINTER.

I.

THE time for walking is in the winter when the frost is on the ground and the cold, fresh, invigorating wind blows. Then does walking cause the heart to beat firmly and the blood to circulate vigorously. But one must walk along a country road where the earth is at once firm and resilient. I am not much of a believer in walking on the hard, dead pavement of a great town. Along the country road. That is the place to step out and along. In winter.

Perhaps it will snow. And then it is that there is an added delight in watching the flying snowflakes whirling and settling. And you will note the pipe and chirp of the robin as you pass along in the fresh invigorating coldness. And the bird of the beautiful, red breast will come forth from beyond the hedge to watch you as you stride along.

The sky is hard and grey and low in tone and the trees stand bare, but the winter landscape has its own beauty. And the winter air —well, for me there is no air such as the winter air. It is so fresh and clean and keen, bearing in it the essence of health. To walk along in it

through the hours of the day will add young years to your life. The mighty earth-magnetism will enter into you as you tread the ground.

It may be that there are some people who think that one can lay too much stress upon the value of walking. But, believe me, this is impossible. For hundreds of thousands of years man has propelled himself by the power lying within himself. And so it is that he contains within him a machinery at once subtle and effective for this purpose. He is perfectly adapted for the sending of himself along by walking. And when he does not use this machinery things go all wrong with him. When you motor or ride a bicycle, you are foolishly endeavouring to upset the work of hundreds of thousands of years. And so you are ill, and you die before your time. Walk, my friend, and you will attain to the ripe and vigorous age that nature intended. Away with motors and bicycles and hansom cabs and all other lazy and sinister devices! Walk, I tell you. Walk and live as God intended. Walk, and you will get yourself free from the thraldom of doctors. Walk, and your brain will clear, and your temper will get balanced and right. Walk, and live.

II.

COME on, now, let us start. Here we are at the door of the country inn where we have passed the night. It is an inn dating from

the time of stout King Hal, and it has rooms with heavily-raftered roofs and thick walls. You noted, of course, the old oak table at which we had dinner last night, and the great open fireplace. And that bottle of old red wine—or, ought I to say, those bottles of old red wine—made us dream dreams last night in the candle-light, at once dim and clear, of the heavily-raftered dining room. What a great and brave talk we had about everything last night. This dear old English country inn! We are leaving it, but we are leaving it for the joy of the English country road in the clear winter morning.

Come along. We won't walk too fast. We'll go easily along. You can set the pace.

The sun is shining. How beautifully soft and clear is this winter sun. There is none of the summer heat in it. There is just a sort of warmth in it that somehow suggests coolness and freshness. Its rays are the colour of a beautiful pale gold.

There—birds come near to us as we pass along. Perhaps they think we have something to give them. Ah—I see you have. You brought a little bread along with you from the inn. The dear old English country inn. Those good old lads of the days of King Hal knew the secret of building houses. They were not in the hurry that we are in to-day. Not being in a hurry! It seems to me that this is the secret of secrets. Nature takes her time over things, and so must man if he

is going to get the best out of that primest gift of all—Life.

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I don't know how you feel about it, but I like the sun in the winter time. Its rays are so soft-golden and friendly.

Ah, you are quickening the pace. I thought you would, as soon as you got into it a bit. But don't go too fast. For I am an old tramp, and the tramp's pace is a slow and a steady one. I like to go at the gait of two miles and a half an hour. That's the gait for covering a distance. None of your four-miles-an-hour gallop for me. At two miles and a half an hour a man never gets tired. He can keep on and on, till, in the end, he wears the quick fellow down.

Here we are up to two other tramps—real men of the road. Look at them. They have solved the secret of life—which is to live healthfully without work. They are the men who understand the magic and beauty of the road—philosophers who have realized that nothing matters very much as long as one is in health. They go along, walking in the easy and comfortable manner that man ought to walk. See that half shuffling, shambling movement of the body. See the head leaning forward, so that its weight helps the momentum of the stride of the leg. That's the proper and natural way to walk. The body is carried along with the minimum expense of energy. Tramps are

the only men who know how to walk properly. The soldier and the athlete are all wrong. They walk as though walking were a thing for show. Walking is not primarily for spectacular purposes. It is for the purpose of enabling a man to carry himself along. It is to the man what flying is to the bird. And the easiest and the best way to walk is to walk as these tramps are walking—with head and body slightly bowed forward and strides turned just the slightest bit in. Not graceful, you say. Oh, yes it is, after your eye gets used to it. All movement that gets the fullest result out of the energy expended is really graceful.

The tramp is the ideal professor of the art of walking.

III.

We are now in the middle of this delightful winter day, and the next inn we come to we'll stop and get something to eat.

Yonder it is—far down the road. The sun shines upon its roof. We will go in and get something to eat and stay for a while, though neither of us feels tired. And after that we will get out again upon the far-stretching road.

The sky is gray and hard and low in tone, but it is clear.

Yes, I knew you would like the walk. And you will like it better still to-morrow, and better still the day after that. You will find yourself getting stronger and more optimistic.

Oh, never mind your business. There will

be business after we are gone. The thing is to walk and to forget everything but the walking and the delights of the road—as do the tramps. Indeed, I half wish that you and I had not a penny between us. We would then get the fuller meaning of this walk through the winter's day. Hardships? Why, of course, we would have hardships. Hardships are the best things in the world for the making of the core of a man sound. You smile. But I tell you that the happiest time I, personally, ever had was when I was an absolute tramp. Life is a mysterious and a strange business, and getting what one wants to get as often as not means nothing. In fact the greatest and most real charm of life is that it is a thing in passing that the biggest mind knows nothing about.

But here we are at the inn.

IX.—THE PORTABLE PEOPLE.

I GOT to the little south of England country town as darkness was coming on, and as I went slowly up its quaint main street the thought came in upon me that a little country town was after all the ideal place in which to live. A man could be himself—he could become known of his fellows and find his full and real appraisement, which is the thing that all men in their hearts desire. In the affrighting, mysterious London a man sank and was lost. He was but one of the sands of a shore over which swept the waves of oblivion. He was effaced, and to be effaced is a hard thing. But in a place such as this little country town he could in a sense attain to the fulness of that which lay within him. He could become known of his fellows. Men grow under the eyes of men.

The quaint main street of the town was full of light and warmth and life. And the weary feeling that lay upon me through the tramp through the day was all at once gone. It was good to be here. It was good to be in the midst of the light and the life—to see the shops and the standing and passing people, who at least took an interest in the one who was a stranger.

I turned into the little hotel to the right that lay in the main street, and after disposing

of my knapsack and getting a bite to eat I was out again to see what was to be seen in the town.

I found myself slowly walking along towards a glare of light. The glare turned out to be the sign and the signal of a portable theatre that lay in a small plot of ground at the end of the street. The theatre had been carried here — walls and roof and everything —upon the wagons belonging to the strolling players, one of whom was now standing full in the light of the flaring gas-jets, exhorting a crowd to come in and view the splendidness of the piece that was about to begin inside. He was a stout man possessing that persuasive quality of voice belonging to those whose business in life it is to please their fellows. And about him was that fine air of the one who wanders along the road. That air of experience and genuine knowledge.

Under the spell of his voice the people were slowly passing into the little theatre. The piece to be seen was a piece that told of the adventures of Dick Turpin and Tom King—two immortal, honest English robbers who in their time had graced the lonesome English roads with interest and deathless romance.

Seats were to be had in the theatre all the way from threepence to a shilling. For a shilling you had the privilege of ruffling it on the front seat with the best in the little town.

I got a seat at the entrance from a stout woman with alert and intelligent eyes, who was

most likely the wife of the stout man with the persuasive voice. And I passed in to the improvised theatre that was now nearly full of men and women and mischievous, shouting boys who had paid their threepence and were there to see the show and to have a little fun. Already they had covered themselves with glory, for they had drawn out the bolts that had fastened up the sixpenny seats and the people who had sat on them had sat farther down than they had intended. Just as I was getting in the people were picking themselves up from the floor. And a man belonging to the company came up and talked about putting them out. However, the bolts were readjusted amidst the sudden silence and innocent looks of the boys in the foremost threepenny seats. And all was well.

The orchestra was composed of a piano that stood down on the floor to the right of the stage, and the pianist played familiar and popular airs which the boys at the back in the threepenny seats particularly appreciated. They filled the theatre with singing and whistling more or less in or out of tune with the air that was being played. The piano sounded as if it were being played by a woman. A tall screen had been placed between it and the audience so that the player was altogether hidden from view.

Up went the curtain.

And on came the players. And the audience, even to the farthest off boy, became suddenly

quiet and intent. And in a moment a broad farce was going in full swing to which the audience were responding in a way that nerved and quickened the actors. The portable theatre shook with shouts and laughter. This farce preceded the more substantial fare that held within it the life and the adventures of the immortal and honest English robbers, Dick Turpin and Tom King.

And these were the players of the road—the portable people who carried themselves and their talent and even their theatre from place to place. These were the true actors from the ranks of whom had sprung the greatest players that had ever trod the English boards. Of late the art of acting in England had declined, and the reason of it was that would-be actors shirked the going through the only experience that could perfect them in their art. The schools of acting in the great towns were worse than useless. They were of no use to the real people of the stage. Indeed, they were in the main but got up for the purpose of advertising some spoiled and over-praised actor. To work with players such as these on the road! That was the only way to get a grip on the acting art. These people played everything from broad farce to Shakespeare. And they worked always with the eye of the audience upon them. It is not the actor that can teach the actor the ultimate secrets of his art. It is the audience alone.

And now came the story of Dick Turpin

and Tom King. The audience roared with delight over the clever way that these valiant robbers managed to make the rich disgorge their wealth. The boys, back in the three-penny seats, were especially delighted. They showed plainly that they considered the high-way robber the finest and grandest person in the world.

And I, myself, was most interested in watching the unfolding of the story of these stirring men who lived in the old, stirring times. It made me feel that I would hardly have minded going into the highway robbery business myself. Such was the power of the acting of these players. And I felt grieved to think that the halo had in reality withered from the brow of the high-way robber. Alas! he was now but one of the departed, and his place was filled by the vulgar and unromantic company promoter who died in commonplace comfort in his bed instead of dying gamely with his boots on. Truly the glory of robbery had fallen on unpoetic and evil days.

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At last the play was over and the people trooped out from the little theatre into the darkness. They had thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They had been held for a while under the spell of the art of the strolling players—these real people of the stage who went from place to place along the road evoking magical pictures of mirth and tragedy and laughter and romance.



IN THE FENS.

X.—THE FENS.

At once I felt the relaxing quality of the air as I walked along from Whittlesea. It was a country flat and stretching and at or below the level of the sea. The country of the Fens. It stretched out evenly as a prairie stretches out, but the sense of great distance was broken and lost by the objects that came up upon it and stood out against the line of the sky —trees and great wind-mills and huge stacks of hay. Everything looked so huge out here on the flatness of the fen. And added to this there was for me an optical effect as if objects inclined slightly forward over the land—as if the land were depressed downward as it approached the object that stood toweringly over it. There was no sense of the earth coming well up and full between one and the distant object at which one was looking. I have walked for days along a prairie and I have always noted the immense plane surface, that lay between myself and the horizon, coming up as it were with a fulness and a suggestion of almost a slight roundness. I have noticed the same thing in looking out across a great distance of water. But here on the fen the earth gave an effect of sinking as the eye took up the distance over it. And

objects loomed and seemed to bend over it. A strange place, the fen.

Nor was it as a vast swamp, though there was the smell of water in the air—that smell vague, and as if intangible, though unmistakable and with a sense of heaviness. One who has ever gone across a country where there was no water will always remember the gentle, vague, spreading-into-air smell of a great body of water in the distance. Perhaps it is that it is not a smell. But certain it is that water gives into the air a something that one inhales and senses.

I was going to Benwick which I was told lay nineteen feet below the level of the sea and which was some eight miles down to the south-east on the borders of the county of Huntingdon.

I was crossing over the Glassmoor Fen. The road was firm and dry but along it ran huge, deep ditches to take off the water from the low level land. The ditches ran along by the side of the great, flat, green, rich looking fields, separating one from the other. On these fields men were working. They, too, looked big against the line of the sky, as the windmills and the stacks of hay and the trees and everything else looked big.

Rain suddenly came in a torrent as I walked along the road through the heart of the fen and objects were cut off from the vision, or were curiously blurred and distorted. It was strange to see things here through the heavy-

pouring rain. They blurred up and became more gigantic still. But the rain left off as suddenly as it came on and the sun came out full and strong, and soon I was dry again as I walked along.

I came upon George—a little herd-boy of eleven years old who was tending cattle here on the fen. He got eight shillings a week and worked from six in the morning to seven at night and a half a day on Sunday. He was a sturdy, intelligent boy who had the look of the open air about him. He had been born here in the midst of these fens. His father was a farm labourer who got fourteen shillings a week. His sister was out at service.

George told me that he would sooner mind pigs than cows, for pigs lay down all day, whilst cows were always moving here and there. Pigs were lazy and that made them easy to mind. Sheep were the hardest of all to mind, said George, for they ran about everywhere.

An old man who was coming from the direction of Benwick stopped on the road and asked me if I could help him. And we fell to talking. He was seventy-three years old but his figure was powerful and almost lithe. He looked as a man who might nearly live as long as he wished. His face was tanned and bronzed and full of health. He was a man with the tramp instinct and following this instinct had given him that grand health that is more than fame or position or riches. He

had slept out under a tree the night before, he told me. If people could only learn that secret of secrets of getting perfect health! I mean if people could only learn to sleep in the sweet, fresh, open air instead of sleeping in foul closed-up boxes, called rooms, all would be well. And open night-air is just as good as open day-air. To sleep out of doors. That's the secret that the tramp knows. All you have to do is to wrap yourself up warm and have something above so that the rain won't get you. I discussed this with the old tramp, and then we separated, each going our ways.

Here was Benwick. A quaint, green, fen village miles off from any railway. It possessed about seven hundred inhabitants and though it was down beneath the level of the sea the people looked happy and cheerful and well. And soon I was in the little village pub enjoying a glass of beer and a smoke and having a chat with the village sons of leisure who knew all the ins and outs and ways of Benwick and knew everything that was to be known about the paths and roads and short cuts over the fens.

I noticed particularly the physical points of these men of the fens. They were middle-sized, vital looking men with clear strong voices. Only people with real lungs could survive and grow here beneath the level of the sea. These fen men were almost the strongest and most vigorous looking men I had seen in the whole

of England. They certainly looked the soundest. And their voices were clear and strong and full.

I was told that there was no fever in the fens. And I must say that I certainly saw no signs of it in the faces of the people I met.

When I was ready to leave Benwick a man told me of a short cut that would save me two miles in my walk to Chatteris which lay seven miles off by the regular road. And he was so clear and concise in his directions concerning this short cut that I for once broke my iron rule to stay by the main road. I followed his directions and I may say here that I did not regret it. I got him first, however, to point to the direction of Chatteris which I took exactly with my compass. And then I went gaily on. The only real bother was to get the lie of the bridges that crossed the wide, deep ditches.

There was one advantage about walking across these fens. A man could go at a swift even pace. There were no ups and downs on the paths and the roads. They were absolutely level and even.

On to two miles out from Benwick I passed an inn, as directed, and crossed the forty-foot river. This river had the appearance of being spaded and dug out and at first I was inclined to think that it was only a canal that had been cut for the draining of the water from the land. But on looking again I noted a slight flow in it.

I turned round by a deep ditch that ran off from it and took a path that struck right across the fen lying between me and Chatteris. And there off from me on a rise of the ground the town was looming over the fen.

XI.—TO WROXHAM BROAD.

It was on a blowy and rather wet Monday morning that I set out with Captain Platten from Great Yarmouth to go up the River Bure to Wroxham Broad. Captain Platten was a picturesque fisherman-looking man who had once been a deep-water sailor. He might have stood for a picture of Captain Vanderdecken of the doomed Dutch ghost-ship. But a Vanderdecken upon whom no curse or ill fate had fallen. He was a genial, good-humoured man who had about him the sea-atmosphere. Time and time again he had beaten up into the monster winds in the rounding of Cape Horn, and after a hard sailor life he had wound up here in Yarmouth taking boats up and down the Bure.

There were not many passengers aboard because of the threat that was in the look of the day, but a day of grey and rain has a charm of its own. For some there is a music in the sound of the wind and the rain, and getting a trifle wet is hardly the awful thing that people imagine. Besides, there is no one that can tell how a day in England is going to turn out.

And we were steaming north up the Bure —"Burr" Captain Platten called it—out over

the flat richly green country which was dotted with great wind-driven water mills.

How like the Bure was to the Maas in Holland. Indeed the country itself was exactly like Holland. And in places the river was dyked-up and ran high up over the flat, stretching, green fields where cows grazed in calm and peace in the midst of the down-coming rain.

For now it was raining hard and Captain Platten was at the wheel wearing his oil-skins and big sou'wester and looking more like a genial Vanderdecken than ever. I was standing by him with my collar turned up facing the rain and trying to take in all he was telling me about the passing landscape.

But the sun suddenly came out and the rain stopped all at once. And the whole of the flat, green country was lit up wonderfully. And the passengers who had gone below to get out of the rain came up on deck again. And the band began to play. The band was composed of two men, one playing the piccolo and the other playing what appeared to be a compromise between a dulcimer and a harp. The piccolo player was an old man with a gentle face. He struck up Sullivan's "Lost Chord." It began to rain again, but he went on valorously to the accompaniment of the other musician who was a powerful man in the prime of life. And then they gave something of a more lively nature. After that there was another piccolo solo. They played on till the rain stopped and the country was

again lit up with the sunlight. Then the old man went round the boat, collecting the well-earned pennies.

To steam over a dyked-up river in a flat country is an experience in itself. One has the feeling of flying smoothly above the land. The country spreads out strangely before you and you see out to a great distance. And you are borne along quickly and evenly and smoothly. Places appear and come and pass.

We had now come some ten miles when the Captain came round and told us to bend down flat to the deck of the boat for we were approaching Acle Bridge. And there was need for his warning for the bridge was so low that there was hardly more than an inch or so to spare above the gunwales of the boat as she passed under it. The funnel had to be swung down on its hinge till it almost touched the deck.

At Stokesby—where we had stopped before we went under Acle Bridge—the children of the place—boys and girls—welcomed us with a song which they sang together in unison. Their object was to get us to throw them pennies for which they scrambled and fought together vigorously. The girls got more of the coppers than did the boys. They were keener and fought and scrambled with the more vigour. Captain Platten told me that the children always sang the same song on the approach of the boats. And as we left the landing stage and went along up the river

some of the boys ran abreast of the boat turning cartwheels.

We turned to the west—passing by St. Benedict's Abbey—and after about a mile we passed by the broad near Horning Hall. Through the bushes and the green and the sunlight one could see the white sails of small yachts. And here it was that we had what might be called a mild adventure. A yacht of about fifteen tons came up in front of us and in trying to get out of our way she ran aground. There followed, of course, the usual and natural argument between our crew and the crew of the yacht, and I am bound to say that we seemed to have the best of it. At any rate they were aground and we were not.

We passed the entrance now that ran into Ranworth Broad, and soon we passed Cockshoot Broad and in a while we were going right through the midst of broads. I was half afraid that we would miss seeing them, but there they were :—the Broad waters, the Decoy Broad, and the smaller Hoveton Broad. The yachts on them seemed to range between five tons burthen and twenty tons. And the people wore a most free and easy and democratic air. Indeed these broads seemed really to belong to the people of England.

A great wherry passed us with tar-blackened sails.

The rain had stopped for good now, and the afternoon was most beautiful. The broads had the effect of silver, fairy stretches of water.



WROXHAM BROAD: MORNING.

The people and the sails of the boats could be seen through the small woods on the banks. There was a broad and woods, and beyond the woods another silver waterstretch.

Hoveton Great Broad and by it Salhouse Broad!

The sun lit up the even, pleasant water-stretches. From them came the sounds of gay voices and laughter.

We were at Wroxham Broad. And slowly and carefully Captain Platten worked the boat up through the entrance to it which was not much more than fifteen feet across.

And we were into the free water—an irregular, long, clear oval with water enough in it to take a ship. Wroxham Broad. The most beautiful of them all. It lay in the sun, limpid and shining with the green of the banks reflected into it. A grand place to row or sail a boat.

We went slowly around it and came out at the entrance through which we had come in—the lower entrance—and again we were making our way up the Bure.

We had now come near on to thirty miles from Great Yarmouth and soon the journey would be over. Soon I would leave the old picturesque Norfolk sea-captain who wore the look of a genial Vanderdecken.

On we went and there before us was the town of Wroxham lying beautiful in the sun.

XII.—THE RIVER.

I.

EVEN when the day is gray and the rain falls the river has its beauty. It flows on to the east to the sea, a being of moods and mysteries and darkness and enchantments. This river is more than London, for it was here before London came and it will flow on to the east to the sea after London is past and gone. Nay, it will flow on to the sea after even the name of the world-town has passed into oblivion—for this Thames was here before man came and it will be here after he has gone. Flowing to the east towards the sea. A being past and beyond and greater even than the thing that man calls Time. A being of blackness and darkness and shadow and clearness and light and wonderful beauty.

Flowing to the east.

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The Thames is the most beautiful river in the world. Or perhaps it is that I ought to say that of all the rivers in the world it is the river that possesses the most charm. And charm is the inner essence and the soul of beauty. The beauty of this great English

river is as the soft beauty of the land of England. It breaks not suddenly in upon the mind. It comes upon one gently, and it lasts in the memory when things that possess a more sudden expression of beauty have faded and gone. This great river winds its spell around you gently and softly even as it winds gently and softly from the west to the east. And so it is that if once you have known it you will always know it. Always will be with you the picture of its moods and windings. And always will be with you the desire to come more fully under its spell. You will wish to understand it more. To see it in all its moods and under all its guises.

It is the most beautiful river in the world.

And to know something of it you must follow it in its windings from London to Oxford—the old, historic town that stands upon its banks over a hundred miles away, reckoning by the winding of the river. Go up the river from London Bridge. Go up it for three days till you pass out of Iffley Lock and you will see the eight-pinnacled tower of Magdalen College slowly appearing before you.

You will then have felt something of the magic of this great dream river of the north.

II.

I TOOK the river at London Bridge and went on in the boat under Southwark Bridge and under Blackfriars and on through Waterloo.

The river was filled with traffic coming and going. And filled with sound. It was as if the sounds of the whole of London had come here upon the face of the smooth-running, shining waters that now ran swiftly past the boat towards London Bridge. The vast town on the banks was lit up full with the light of the sun which seemed to shine from all places. It was on in the afternoon of a wonderful day and London was full of light which the face of the river reflected.

Here passing was the obelisk that had been quarried out in the Egypt that was now gone more than three thousand years. For more than a thousand years this old stone with its carven mystic signs had lain in the sands of Alexandria and now it stood by the side of the river that ran through the mightiest town the world had known.

The stone of Egypt.

Its reflection lay on the face of the river. And we passed under Westminster Bridge and by the Houses where sat the men who made the laws of England. And the turrets of the Houses passed as we swept on.

How beautiful were the curves of the arches that upheld the great bridges spanning the great river! Surely has the hand of man fashioned nothing more beautiful than the curve of an arch. I turned and looked off to the arches through which we had passed. Soft shadows fell from them upon, the smooth running water beneath, making an effect of

reflection into which ran the sunlit waters. And from the arches off before us the waters ran shining out of a reflection.

Here was Hammersmith. We had come nine miles up the river from London Bridge. Nine miles through the sounds of London.

And still London stretched out and around and beyond us—an infinite labyrinth town-maze of houses and buildings and crossing and recrossing streets.

Green and trees now appeared on the banks of the river and it was as if the life-sounds of London were growing less, but still the world-town stretched inexhaustibly. Here on the river one grasped to its full the might and magnitude of London.

The sun was now descending into the west and the shadows were coming. And I left the boat and stayed in Hammersmith till the next day.

III.

AGAIN I was going along the river. And here was an eyot—a small island in the river. And we went on, leaving Chiswick behind and on till we were abreast of Mortlake.

We were now breathing a soft, delicious, healing air. And the fulness of the charm of the river began slowly to come in upon us.

And suddenly something seemed to have gone from the air. It was the sound of the voice of the London that lay behind us. It had seemed to die away without one knowing

it. The night before we had been in the grasp of the town at Hammersmith. It was as if London stretched out to the end of the world. But now it was gone. We were now here with the river that reigned completely and peacefully over the land.

And there came upon one a sense of rest. One had passed into the keeping of the spell and the thrall of the river that was now winding gently in the midst of freshness and greenness. Winding in the midst of the light of morning.

Here slowly appeared the soft spreading green of the park in which lay the palace of Hampton Court. We had passed Richmond and Kew and Kingston. And slowly in the park the palace appeared. The river and the banks of the river and the light upon the river made now a scene of soft and magical beauty. This river was surely as a great dream river. The dream river of the north. A winding river of shining restfulness.

The old palace had now come up full before us. And off yonder was Molesey Lock through which the boat had just passed that was going on its way to Oxford. I had missed it and would have to wait for the morning of the next day. But what mattered a day here upon this beautiful river? I would be all the longer within its spell and thrall. Days here on the river were magical days. In them man learned the folly of hurry and restlessness. This slow-



THE RIVER: KEW BRIDGE.

winding river held a lesson that man might well read.

This magical, shining river of a dream.

IV.

How wonderful is the Thames in the clear light of the morning. How clear and strange is the light and the reflection of the light and the trees and the banks and the softly flowing water that goes voicing along. Clear is the light and clear and soft and gentle is the river as it goes calmly along off to the wide sea. And the smooth waters ripple as the fish rise. And boats gently pass. Magical is the Thames in the clear light of the morning.

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We were passing through Walton Reach that lay between Sunbury Lock and Shepperton Lock. And here to our right was the weir at Tumbling Bay. The rumbling voice of the weir drowned the gentler voice of the river. And we passed under Walton Bridge and soon we were at the lock at Shepperton. London Bridge lay now thirty miles behind us.

The lock gates opened for us to pass in—and they closed—and the sounding water from the higher reach was pouring in upon us. And we rose and rose and rose. And the water was still and the further gates opened and we passed forth along the reach to the next lock. It was delightful to go into a lock—and to listen to the water pouring in—and to

rise—and to pass out. Though we stopped at these short stages the sound and the moving of the water was always with us. One stopped, and still one went on. Always going higher and higher.

Here was Staines and here was the Old Windsor Lock and here was Windsor where we stopped and went ashore for an hour. An old, vague, English country place with a castle and a great, green park. A storied, historical, royal place by the side of the river.

Boveney Lock. And we rounded the bend to the right and we went on passing river islands till Maidenhead hove into sight. Under the bridge we passed going by islands again, and here on our right was the green and beautiful Clieveden stretching for miles up to Hedsor.

The river had now attained to a dream romance. The trees of Clieveden hung over the water which gave clear reflections of leaves and branches. And a wind stirred through the trees and the reflections were waving. The clear water and the sunlight and the green and the motion blended into an effect of magical romance and charm. It was as a dream effect and still it was not vague. Into the midst of all there was penetrating a transfiguring and splendid clearness. Water and motion and light and green. And still the clearness was soft. In it was a pellucid stillness. A quietude. An effect of magic. And the wind died away and the reflection of the branches and the leaves were still.

And coming through all was the under-voice of the river.

V.

And how gay was the river with its house-boats, and its people in rowing-boats, and its merry parties coming and going. How the people laughed as their boats came into the locks. And here were lovers going gently along with the stream. Surely it was a happy augury for their voyage in after life that they should have sailed along this beautiful, peaceful river in the first days of their love for each other. Surely the gods were smiling upon them here in the midst of the light and the green and the calm, flowing quietude.

And men stood fishing from the banks. They heeded neither the coming nor the going of the passing crafts. They stood still and dreamily intent—neither heeding nor caring for the roll of time. As we passed them they did not even raise their heads. They were absorbed in the soul and the spirit of the river. Still, silent fishermen.

We passed some girls who were swimming. A match had been arranged between lock and lock and they were going steadily along, swimming with the grace that belongs to women. It seems to me that a woman swims with far more grace and ease than a man.

A wonderful afternoon.

Life passed easily and calmly as life ought

to pass. There came into one the soothing spirit of the river.

Approaching Great Marlow the river widened out wonderfully. We were in Bourne Reach where the sailing boats had their races.

Evening came, and here was Henley. The journey for the day was over. Behind us, sixty-five miles away were the sounds of London.

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Still another glorious day before us. A day of calm moving in the sunlight—of rising in the sounding locks—of going from reach to reach in the greenness—of seeing the people in the boats pass—of seeing the life in the meadows and fresh fields.

All the time the river was changing. Its beauty and its mood were ever varying.

This was my fourth day upon it and I felt as if I could go along it for ever.

Reading lay behind us, and we were passing through Kentwood Deeps at the end of which an island divided the river. Here it was that we seemed to be sailing over the land on a boat. The banks closed in upon us. One might almost touch the trees as we were gliding out to the open water towards Mapledurham. And we passed on by the hills to the right—and rose up in the lock at Whitchurch—and entered Pangbourne Reach, extending four miles.

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Out rang the beautiful bells of Abingdon, an old town that was as if it rose out of the

quiet waters of the river. We had left Goring and Wallingford behind us and the bells rang as if to welcome us. We were rounding Andersey Island and Oxford was now away from us but eight miles. And two girls came along paddling a canoe the name of which was "Nirvana." A name fitting in with the spirit and the mood of the river.

And an old man on the boat began to tell me of Abingdon. And from telling me of Abingdon he got to the telling me of the moods of the river. He told me of the time, years and years ago when first he began to know it. And now he was old and about to pass.

An old, gray man who loved this beautiful river. He would pass, but still the river would go on its way and there would come others who would know and understand it and pass as he was about to pass. The old, gray man talked vaguely and softly of the river. To-day had been a day even as the best day that came to his memory from out of the past.

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How the water roared down into the deep Sandford Lock. And we rose slowly up to the level of the reach. We were coming to the end of our journey. The day was closing. The quiet, beautiful day on the river.

And we glided calmly along in the soft light and the soft, lengthening shadows. It

was the end of the day here on the Thames. The end of the journey here on the dream river of the north.

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And slowly appearing were the spires of Oxford.

THE MAELSTROM.

I.—THE MYSTERY OF LONDON.

I.

EVEN when the sun shines in the full of day there is a mystery over London. One is in a vague, vast, teeming, unknown place. One wanders through unknown passing and re-passing myriads. The air is clear and the sunshine burns strong, but still it is as if one were surrounded by a tremendous, all-spreading vagueness. You are in a place of infinite magnitude—a roaring, stretching place that has neither beginning nor end. You wander —detached—in an immense, myriad-peopled, myriad-voiced solitude.

The mystery of London. It comes to you, it seizes you. It matters not if you are one who belongs to this stupendous world-place, or if you are but a stranger who is passing. You pass through the hurrying crowds of people who are detached as you are detached. You hear the multitude of sounds, and you hear the mighty, roaring under-sound that is beneath these sounds. The voice of London speaks to you beneath the outer voices.

The sun is shining and the streets are filled with light. Everything about you is clear and definite. But in the clearness there is vagueness and mystery. Where are these detached people

going? What is their object? What is their end?

In the definiteness there is a spreading, bewildering confusion.

And you wander as one who is lost.

II.

LONDON is the concentrated expression of the world-crowd. It is the expression of man as he throngs and gathers together. It is the last word of the shouting, tremendous multitude.

A time will come to pass when London will be dead, when her multitude of multitudes will be gone and scattered. A time will come when the crowd shall no longer reign, when the individual shall be sufficient unto himself. The immense, mysterious London will pass into the night. And to the man of the future she will be but a strange word. A word telling of a time when his fathers herded confusedly together.

III.

YOU pass along through streets upon streets till you come to the broad, calm-flowing river upon which the stupendous London stands. And you look out upon the water. The sun shines upon it. How beautiful is this slow, broad, calm river. The tumult of the world-town is softened.

This old, calm river will be here when the town is silent and gone to dust. It will flow on

when the mystery of London has sunk into the abyss of time.

IV.

IT may be that you are standing on a bridge gazing out over London in the gray of the early morning. The spires of the churches are coming into view in the distances as the light grows. And at last the rays of the sun flash out upon the river.

How beautiful is London then. How softened and magical is its mystery. Its roaring under-voice is becoming louder and louder. But there is no menace in it.

At this time London is a place of magic and enchantment. It is softened and made beautiful by the light of morning. The river and the light and the town are one. The whole is a scene, vast mysterious and enchanting.

V.

DAY in and day out, week in and week out, London is ever the same. Ever the mystery hangs over it. And still it is always changing. Always there is in it something new and strange. Its mighty, roaring, under-voice changes its tone. Listen and you will hear. Its meaning is not to-day as it was yesterday. Nor will it be the same on the morrow. It is not for you to comprehend what the stupendous under-voice is saying. You are but an atom in the peopled wilderness. This London

is vaster and more significant than all the great men who have come and gone. And you wander along, listening to its voice. What it says you know not. You know but that it is changing. Ever changing.

Perhaps as you go along you will meet some wanderer you know. It may be that you last saw him in a far away part of the world. Why is he here? What brought him here? A sense of surprise is upon you. You are astonished to see him in this vast mysterious place. It is as if you suddenly came upon someone in a lone ocean waste. As if someone rose out of the depths to greet you.

VI.

THIS town of strange and wonderful chance. You pass along the streets weary and foot-sore and sad. Fate has been hard with you and hope has left you. For you the end has come. Fortune has closed its gate against you.

You wander aimlessly, and lo! you meet someone. And everything is changed. The tide turns. The gate of fortune is opened to you. Your sadness and weariness have left you. Chance, the genie, has befriended you. You met him as you wandered aimlessly and sadly along.

One need never wholly despair in this great lone London. When you are at your lowest ebb you may walk confidently along. Something may happen. Something may come to

you. For in this place so cold and terrible and mysterious there dwells that god of gods—Chance. Always he is here. You may meet him at any moment. And he may lift you from your despair. His ways are mysterious. He is as the vast lone town. But here he dwells. He is here in London in all places and at all times. So despair not, but walk along with lifted head. It may be that you will meet him. It may be that he will greet you here in the midst of the mystery of London.

VII.

AND still is there in London cohesion. Its people though apart are bound together. They are linked by the tie of kind and by the mystery of attraction. They are alone, and still they are together.

These moving myriads of people are worlds within themselves. They have their own secret laws that none shall fathom, as London has its secret laws that none shall fathom. And still they obey great, common, crowd-laws. They are at once individuals and of a crowd.

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The mystery of London is the mystery of the crowd. And so far in the life of the world the crowd has been dominant. The great men have been but its voices. They have done but what the crowd wished even though they knew it not.

But the time will come when the power of the crowd will pass. A time will come when the individual will be the lord of himself.

When this time comes to pass the end will have come upon this immense, stupendous London.

It will have sunk with its mystery into the abyss of time.

II.—THE TERRACE.

I.

THE House of Commons governs England and the terrace governs the House of Commons. This fact is plain even to the most unseeing eye. All that you have to do is to journey thither under the wing of a member. And you will feast your eyes upon a most beautiful and exhilarating scene. You will see gay, lively, and lovely woman charming the lofty-browed statesman. These statesmen adjourn to the terrace to allow the wind to waft around them and to be soothed by the presence of beauty. And if you be a keen observer you will note the lines of care gradually fading from their lofty foreheads. The statesmen are easing up from their stupendous mental labours. Inside, in the House, they wield the iron rod of governing. But out here, on the terrace, they themselves come beneath the spell of the wand of beauty.

It is often asserted by the foreigner that English women are rarely beautiful—that they are heavy and self-conscious—that charm is not one of their points. But surely this foreigner is a foreigner who has never had the good fortune to be taken on to the terrace in the height of the season. Did this happen to him, he would most certainly once and for all

revise his opinion of English women. He would see that they were not the heavy, dull, and self-conscious creatures of his imagination. He would see that the pictures representing them in his comic papers were gross libels. He would see that they were at once charming, airy, gay, and beautiful, and beautifully dressed. And he would have to acknowledge the fact that the lions of debate and the statesmen with the corrugated brows were, one and all, men of good taste.

Really, I had no idea myself that there were so many beautiful women in England till I had the happiness to be taken one afternoon on to the terrace by a member who—well, who chances to be an ascetic. As I gazed upon the scene I felt proud of my countrywomen. As I stalked to and fro with my ascetic friend, listening to the music of their voices, I wished with all my heart that I possessed enough money to buy a seat in the House of Commons. My friend was explaining to me the wonders of Westminster, but I fear I had no ears for what he was saying. My whole attention was taken up with the charming and seductive creatures who were adorning the terrace. What happiness to have the privilege of coming here every day, I thought. How delightful to be able to look at them, and to hear them, and—greater delight still—to talk to and to be near to one of them. I had seen beautiful women in Spain. But these women were in their own way just as beautiful. And they had a freshness

and delicacy of colouring which Spanish women did not possess.

These delicious Englishwomen!

I had sat in the Strangers' Gallery at times listening to the lions of debate putting forth argumentive subtleties. I had listened to them as they said nothing in a pompous and roundabout and resounding manner. I had listened to Ministers of the Crown answering questions in a manner that was at once obscure and misleading and insolent and civil. I had heard members calling each other liars by other names. I had seen them asleep and awake and yawning and attentive. And in the end I had felt for them a sympathy. Their lot had seemed to me to be a weary lot. But now, as I walked along this terrace, my sympathy was changed to envy. Who would not belong to a place that boasted a terrace adorned such as this? Never mind though one had to pay dearly in cash down for the privilege. As I looked round upon the array of stock-brokers and company promoters, and legal gentlemen—who represented my country in Parliament—I felt an envy of the greenest kind. But in time the envy left me. It was charmed out of me by the beautiful and seductive scene. By the ladies.

II.

It was a glorious day, and the sun was shining full on the river. Boats and barges were

passing along and the men on them turned and looked at the scene on the terrace as they passed. Some of them waved their hands, and some of them shouted gaily. They evidently felt that they were being fittingly represented in the great forum of the nation. And they passed down the river—strong men of labour. Not for them were the seductive delights that the lofty-browed statesmen were enjoying. They were merely common, ordinary men of England who paid the cost that these delights incurred. They passed along down the river. The men who paid.

III.

I CAME again to the terrace in the evening when the moon was full and shining. Nearly all the people had gone from it and its effect was quiet and strange. The lamps along it were shining softly and mysteriously. And the people who passed now and then spoke in low, quiet voices.

It was Westminster, mysterious and soft and beautiful in the light of the moon and stars. Westminster quiet and strange and beautiful. A place dignified and calm.

The clear, soft, cool light fell upon the walls and spires and towers and arches. From the terrace one seemed to get a view of all things. There over the strange-shining river was the London of the worker and the outcast. An immense, spreading desolate place of

poverty, struggle, and hunger. And out of this desolate place this beautiful terrace had grown. Slaves such as the slaves who lived off over yonder had put these great stones into place. They had laid them deep down into the bed of the strange-shining river. Slaves had built this wonderful Westminster upon which the moon was shining. They had built its lofty spacious halls, its impressive towers, its halls of debate. From their hands had grown this wondrousness that was now shining magically in the light of the moon and stars. The slaves of the great London had built this terrace where came the beautiful women. Where came the men who ruled and ordered their slavery.

This whole wonderful and beautiful edifice was the work of slaves. And I thought of the column that lay further down on the side of the shining river. The column that had been quarried out of the living rock thousands of years ago by the slaves of another race. What were these slaves of the old Egypt like? What was the manner of their lives? What was the likeness that lay between them and the slaves of the wonderful London? Were they cheated in a like manner with words?

I wondered concerning this as I walked along the terrace.

IV.

THIS terrace where came the beautiful women to smile on those who were the masters!

How beautiful it was here in the moonlight with its softly-shining mysterious lamps. How beautiful and strange and peaceful was the whole scene. It seemed almost as if it held a promise of a wonderful time to come. But was, after all, the Thames but the Nile? Who was to know? Who was to tell?

It might be that thousands of years were but small steps in the advancement of man. That they counted for but little either one way or the other. Who was to know aught of the glories of the civilizations that were lost in the darkness of time?

It might be that this scene of strange and beautiful peace held within it a promise.

III.—WESTMINSTER.

I.

MEN who have been elected to talk for the good of their country in Westminster often declare that they are sick and tired of the place, that it destroys their energy, that the air is all wrong, that this and that and the other is all wrong—in fact, that the general tone and surroundings of the place are harmful to them. They wish that they could, with decency, leave it! And they tell you, confidentially of course, of the happiness that will steal over them when the Government is turned out. When that glorious time arrives they will be able to leave the awful, deadly dull place. They will be able to retire from the home and sanctuary of bores. They will have leave to be themselves. Once more they will be free.

Of course, they may—well, they may stand for election again. Just as a matter of form. And—well, in a way, as a matter of loyalty to the party. But—God forbid that they should be elected again to the awful place! In fact, the one who listens to them begins to fear that something dreadful might happen to the poor suffering member were he to have the misfortune to be elected again. It might

be that the poor fellow, in his agony, would do something desperate. Who knows but that he might not commit suicide? And, if you are a listener of the truly sympathetic calibre, you join with the member in hoping that such a dreadful contingency as the regaining of his seat will never occur. You are sad and sorry for the poor member. You sit and smoke and condole with him.

And still—well, human nature is after all a very complex and contradictory affair. If the poor member is so awfully annoyed at being in Parliament, why is it that he doesn't leave it at once? Why doesn't he apply for the Chiltern Hundreds? Why doesn't he get out of it? This base and disloyal thought is apt to come into your head as you sit and listen to him. Mere, vulgar common sense puts it there. But you dismiss it indignantly. One glance at the member's face shows you that he is suffering. He is very sorry indeed for himself.

Still—a fact is a fact. This truth slowly dawns upon you after you have got away from the influence of the member's sorrow. How is it that men who have once been in Parliament always try to get back again? Why don't they refuse with scorn and indignation to stand for re-election? Why are they so eager to get back into the home and sanctuary of bores? Ah—why?

Can it be possible that, after all, these men are patriots? Can it be possible that they

so love dear old England that they are willing to sacrifice themselves for her upon the grid of boredom? This must be the solution of the mystery. When once a man has been in Parliament he becomes a patriot.

II.

AND still Westminster is one of the most beautiful places in the whole world. It is a wonderful maze of beautiful chambers and rooms and cloisters and spaces and chapels. Just to go into the central hall and into the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons is not to know Westminster at all. Though the central hall and the vestibule leading to it are very beautiful, still to get an idea of the beauty and meaning of Westminster one must wander at leisure through the whole of it.

* * * * * *

There is the Crypt. A strange, small chapel, coming from the time of the far-off Saxons. To reach it one descends a flight of steps. A quaint old door is opened, and you enter into the strange, curiously-roofed little chapel. How it shines in the dim light that comes in through the windows! The powerful, circular, groined roof is as if it were covered with beaten gold.

How quiet and still is this Crypt! The silence of the centuries is upon it. Here worshipped in this strange place of half-gloom

warriors and nobles and kings and queens and grand dames. Their ghosts pass before you as you stand reverently. Here clanked the scabbard of the great sword as the warrior knelt and prayed that victory might crown his arms. Here in the silence and the dead of night people of old kept vigils. Under this circular, groined, strange roof! Before this still altar! Here prayed the people of a sincere, devout age—an age when all men were wise enough to render obeisance and homage to the Unknown.

This altar-cloth. How strangely it is embroidered! The queens of England who are gone worked upon it with their own hands. Here is the device that Queen Philippa worked into it. The gentle and kind queen who pleaded with her husband that the citizens of Calais might be spared. And here is the device that was worked into the cloth by the mighty Queen Elizabeth. Many embroideries are in this old purple cloth. It tells many stories here in the dim silence.

The little chapel shines in the half-gloom. It is filled with a dark, soft golden shimmering. A beautiful, strange place of quietude—of golden quietude.

These old stones. What could they not tell of the people who knelt upon them and prayed to God? What could they not tell of king and queen and fair woman and strong captain-in-arms and silken courtier and iron administrator? What could they not tell of

monk and abbot and thoughtful, strange-faced priest? What could they not tell of the thoughts and aspirations of those long gone to dust? These old stones have heard the confessions of the centuries. In war, in peace, in fair time, in dark time, in times of terror and gloom and light and splendour and darkness, men came to pray here. Here in the silence. They knelt here upon the old stones. Here in the Crypt.

The light steals softly in. And lo! the arching roof of the Crypt is illumined. What power and might there is in the lines of the roof. How massive and wonderful is the arching. And over yonder in the shadow the lines soften and disappear, and the shadow deepens down into darkness. A wonderful roof.

The Crypt. A place of solitude and silence and the past.

III.

We walk down a corridor. And here is the room where Cromwell stood and handed out through the window the death-warrant of Charles I.

What manner of man was this strong Cromwell? What was the expression of his face? Did the glance of his eye pierce and menace? We have portraits of him. But portraits tell but what they wish to tell. In what manner did his voice sound? How did this strange and terrible man deport himself

—this man whose dust was scattered to the winds by the people of England? This man of power. Who is there to tell us aught that is true about him? The people of his time saw him but this way or that way. They saw him not in his roundness.

This man who shook England—who shook a king from a throne.

Men of power are as swords that are double of edge. They build nations, but they also wreck them. They overthrow tyranny, and put tyranny in its place. With glowing, terrible words they set alight the frightful, purifying fire of revolution. But the fire but whirls in a circle. It comes back and shrivels them. They bring forth the sword that in the fulness of time turns and slays themselves. And still there is magic and wonder in the man of power. He draws all to him. He is a true king. And centuries after he has gone to dust weak men sing his praises. For power is the essence of everything. It is behind all elements. An uncontrolled, splendid, mysterious agency. The man of power cannot hold even himself. He must go on. He must commit fine and splendid and sinister acts. He must be at once a god and a devil. He must be as ruthless and as furious as wind and fire. And men will bless and men will curse him. This Cromwell was a man of power.

And it came to pass that his dust was scattered to the wind by the people of England.

IV.

HERE is a hall great and magnificent. And here is the place where stood the king who died on the block. Surrounding him, in this great and magnificent hall, were his accusers —the men who had willed it that he was to die. The king had fallen into the grasp of power. And he stood here to say what was to be said for himself. He stood here, saying that there was none who had the right to arraign him. But he might as well have spoken to wind or fire. He was in the grasp of power.

* * * * * *

A man who is born a king has within him a force, curious and subtle. Through his life men have bowed before him. Men have bent before him as rushes bend before the wind. Always he has been paid homage and deference. He has never met the bold, square look that lives in the eyes of men who are men. He lives in the world of bent backs. He is in effect and practice the superior of everyone he meets. He is born into an atmosphere of deference. And he would not be human did he not feel that he was past other men. A man is as his environment—as the air he breathes. And it would be strange indeed were the king not affected by the practical divinity that hedges him. For even the great men in war and art and learning and riches pay homage to him. And there comes to him a superb

insolence. The divine insolence of a king. It speaks in the glance of his eye. It is a force, curious and subtle. It is not power, but it acts for power—save on momentous and terrible occasions.

It spoke from the eye of Charles as he stood here in this great hall, awaiting the sentence of doom that in the end was pronounced upon him. But it availed him not. The king had naught to lean upon save the man that was within him. He was alone.

He fell—but let the just thing be said. He fell nobly—as a king should fall.

V.

HERE is the great wide vestibule that leads towards the House of Commons. Here, statued in the lasting stone, are the men of debate. The men whose fame still rings through the years. They stand silent and still along the great corridor. The hush of death has long fallen upon them. They are gone. But they are here. Statued in the lasting stone.

Up the steps you pass, and you are in the central hall. High up in niches around the wall are statues of kings and queens. To the right is the House of Lords, where sit men who are legislators by the right of birth.

The House of Lords is a beautiful chamber. At the end of it are chairs of state where sit the King and the Queen and the Prince of Wales when Parliament is being opened.

The prevailing tone of colour in this chamber is red. All the other colours and tints rest upon it. A strange, red chamber. A place of beautiful proportion and balance. The light comes softly in through the stained windows.

And there is a quietude and dignity in the chamber. In this sense it has almost the effect of the Crypt. But it gives forth no feeling of the past. And still there is no sense of the modern in it. It is a beautiful chamber that might belong to any time. A place of perfect proportion and balance. A beautiful place that might belong to the past, or the present, or the future. A red chamber.

It gives no effect of luxury—no effect of ornateness. And still these effects are in it, but they are lost in the quietude and dignity of the whole. They are lost in the simplicity that belongs to the effect of perfect balance.

A place of chosen words.

Here is the Woolsack, where sits the highest dignitary of the English law. A great, low, red, cushioned square. Upon it sits, robed and in state, the Lord Chancellor. He sits here whilst the Lords deliberate in chosen words. For in this chamber things go in an ordered and sedate manner, as befits a body of men who are born wise into the world. The great man of law sits solemnly upon this great, low, red, cushioned square. He is the sedate and decorous guide of a sedate and decorous assemblage.

And still the Woolsack had a simple beginning. It was simply a sack of wool upon which an old man sat. He was the centre of a group of younger men, and he was favoured because the years were heavy upon him. These men were rude and simple, and they were chosen to control and guide the affairs of their fellows, not because they were born wise; but because they were wise. But this time was centuries and centuries ago. It was the time when the kings were kings because they were kings. It was the time when lords were lords because they were lords.

VI.

INTO the central hall come all types and conditions and classes of men. And all races. This hall might be called the centre of the British Empire. All through the day and into the night men are coming in and going out through the swinging doors. And they stand around waiting for members to come through the lobby from the House. They wear the eager air of men who are actively pursuing aims and objects. As a rule they talk in quiet subdued voices whilst they are waiting. The hall is an impressive place.

It is a busy place, but still there is about it a quietness and an orderly air. It has almost an air of solemnity. The voice of the messenger echoes as he calls out a member's name as it would echo in a church. The police-

men look solemn and responsible. It is as if they were bearing the real weight and responsibility of running the British Empire. They are at once solemn and grave and very polite and very watchful.

The stranger, on gazing upon one of these grave and solemn guardians of legislation, would be apt to feel that to offer him a tip would be a piece of presumption—that it would be almost a sacrilege. In fact, the innocent stranger would probably almost as soon think of offering a tip to a Minister of the Crown. These policemen embody British dignity and stateliness.

In sharp contrast to the manner and air of the policemen is the manner and air of a member of the House when he stands at the barrier, waiting for the person to come forth who has sent in to see him. The policeman calls out the member's name in a solemn, sonorous, and religious voice, and a hush falls upon the subdued hum in the central hall. It is all but impossible to describe the member's manner as he stands waiting. It is a mixture of jaunty ease and dignity, and consciousness of being one of the great, and of condescension, and affability. It is a mixture of all these things, but perhaps the dominant thing in his manner is jaunty ease. The easy, natural, sufficient-unto-himself air that comes to the one who is undisputed master of the situation. He stands whilst the policeman calls out his name in a solemn, sonorous, and religious voice, and

his eye roams around. Ah! It has caught the eye of the man who has sent in to see him. If the man be a modest and retiring man, he has most likely shrunk back with diffidence into the crowd. The ringing sound of the policeman s voice has made him nervous of approaching the legislator. But the eye of the legislator has found him out. It disentangles him from the waiting ruck around the barrier. Even if the member has never seen the man before, he is still able to pick him out. His eye has become trained. And the member greets the one who has called after the manner of a genial but busy potentate.

VII.

THE chamber of the House of Commons has none of the beauty and dignity of the chamber of the House of Lords. It has at once a busy, and a lounging, free-and-easy air. When looking down into it from the Strangers' Gallery, one has the sense of looking down into a cockpit. Which, indeed, it is. The lounging, bored-looking, aged, middle-aged, and young men are there to fight it out. They are there to contradict, and cavil at, and to argue one another down.

With all their free-and-easiness there is the suggestion of a slumbering aggressiveness in the manner of the members. In the central hall outside a member has the manner of a jaunty, genial, but busy potentate, but this

manner fades from him the instant he enters the chamber. If you watch closely from the gallery you will see the change. First, a slight frown comes over his face, and then there is the look of the effort to get into touch with what is going on. Then the frown deepens, and by the time he has got to his seat that frown has changed to a dangerous "look-out-for-me" expression. The oratory that is going forth may lull him to sleep, but even in slumber his face wears a hard expression. It is curious.

Ministers have a different manner of entering the chamber. They do not wear the air of aggression that is worn by the private member. Their manner has the suggestion of looking out for attack. They look like men who don't know where or how they will be hit.

Some of them stroll in in a languid, indifferent way, as though they were weary of the House and everything in it. Others come in in a quick, haughty way, whilst others wear a mask of severe aloofness.

But all this is mere hollow pretence. Beneath it the seeing eye will detect the manner of men who are living under the sword. One feels that in reality they are but well-groomed Ishmaels. Ishmaels who are in the receipt of fat salaries. They are the friends of no one but themselves. They are there for the purpose of being shot at. They are there for the purpose of being grumbled at because they are unable to run the Empire on ideal and heavenly lines. Poor fellows!

The stranger in the gallery feels a sorrow for them — that is, if he be at all human. Poor, tired holders up of a vast empire. It is only when they are asleep on the front bench that they come forth, so to speak, in their true colours. All pretence is then gone. A softened, sorrowful, haggard expression rests upon their faces. Poor, well-groomed, fat-salaried Ministers of the Crown. One feels sorry for them.

But there is a man in the chamber whose lot is far worse than the lot of any Minister. It is the Speaker. His fate is sad indeed. He is condemned to listen eternally to everybody. Other men may interrupt and make noises, or shout insults guised in a Parliamentary manner at a droning orator, or go out. In fact, they may do almost anything—short of actual physical assault—to show their inappreciation of some prosy Demosthenes. They may even go to sleep before his face—thus inflicting that last and most deadly insult upon eloquence.

But the Speaker! There is no hope of salvation for him. He is one who is condemned. He must listen—listen. He must take careful note of everything. He must know the thread of what is being said. He must know the last word—foolish or otherwise—that has been spoken. He must have the tact and patience of twenty ambassadors rolled into one. And even then he will fail. He must know who to allow to interrupt and who not to allow to interrupt. He must know when

to be stern and when to be easy. When to allow a liberty and when not to allow it. He is the father of this cockpit. In fact, he is all things rolled up into one. The timekeeper, the referee, the interposer, the encourager, the discourager—the everything.

Poor Speaker. His fate is as the fate of the Chinese criminal, who is condemned to be kept awake through long periods of time. Indeed, his fate is worse even than that of the Chinese wrongdoer, for the Chinaman is assisted, in keeping awake, by subtle and ingenious devices. He is helped in his task by the wit and skill of his fellows. But there is no one to help the poor unfortunate Speaker. He must do it all by himself. And how he manages it no one knows—perhaps not even himself. But he manages it. He keeps awake through the early and late and small hours. He listens to the perpetual flow of oratory that but too often has no other quality than a soothing, restful quality.

In a word, the Speaker is an example of what a human being can do when he is driven to it.

After the Speaker has done his time—and I say time advisedly—he is created a peer. But this is surely a most inadequate reward. It is a small thing to do for a man who has passed through what he has passed. He ought in common fairness to be made, at the very least, a duke. To be made a peer is something, of course—but it is not enough.

He is made a peer. He may now go and repose in the sanctity and quietude of the House of Lords. He may go and take a long-needed sleep.

VIII.

To the eye of the stranger the manners of the men in the chamber of the House of Commons are odd. They are conventional in the sense of conforming to certain usages —but at the same time they are very natural. One feels that the men are as much themselves as it is possible for them to be. The parliamentary usage to which they conform is but the lightest of light cloaks. It in no way hides the personality of the man who is wearing it. In fact, you feel that he is more himself than usual when he is in the chamber.

The men strike one as being really rough and rude in their attitude towards each other. No man would dream of saying such things to a man as may be said in the chamber of the House of Commons. At least he would not dream of saying them without he were ready, if the need arose, to fight with him. Of course, the things said are said in compliance with a certain form of usage. They are said in a certain way. But complying with a certain form of usage when, in effect, a man is giving another man the lie in no way takes from the force and sting of the insult. In fact, the hypocritical courtliness of phrase only adds to it. Outside the chamber this

method of giving the man the lie would only be apt the more quickly to lead to blows. Men openly sneer at each other in the chamber, and interrupt each other, and are, generally—when they feel that the occasion calls for it—as rude and rough and insulting as men may well be, short of resorting to actual physical violence.

Over all this, of course, is the gloss of parliamentary form which really only emphasizes the naturalness—to put it with mildness—of one member's manner towards another.

To the observer this whole thing may appear at first sight to be somewhat extraordinary. But when one comes to think the matter over it will be seen that there is a very good reason for it. Men are really sent here for the purpose of fighting. Even though they represent, practically, but one class of the community, still their interests, and if not their interests at least their points of view, are in conflict. And, after all, it is in this chamber where the business of the greatest empire in the world is carried on. Here momentous interests are examined into, and all their bearings and relations to things thrashed out. Upon the words that are uttered here may hang the fate of thousands upon thousands. Small wonder is it, then, that the men who debate in it drop affectation. Small wonder is it that they act in a natural manner towards one another. They are continually dealing with real issues, and reality brings men to bed-rock.

This chamber is often a dull and heavy place, but it is a place significant and momentous. There is a curious undercurrent and thrill in its atmosphere. One feels this even when one is inclined to smile at what is going on in it. One feels it even as one listens to the droning voices of dull men. It is a place greater by far than the greatest and most solemn court of justice. It is an intensely human place. Here there is neither pomp nor ceremony. The usages and forms that exist in it are but the merest trappings. The men within it are themselves from first to last. It is a place at once simple and terrible and matter-of-fact. From it comes the signal for the marching forth of armies and the sending forth of tremendous ships of destruction. From it comes the signal for the flowing of blood and the ravage and the desolation of war, and from it comes the signal for the ringing of the bells of peace. These commonplace, weary-looking men hold within them powers vaster by far than the powers of the immense and terrible beings told of in the old Arab tales. These men at whom you may smile, or at whom you may laugh, hold the fate of their kind within their hands.

* * * * * *

A wonderful place, this Westminster.

And at times, wonderful men have stood within it. Here spoke the mighty-voiced O'Connell—that great and splendid Irishman—

that glorious man of genius. Within this place he fought for the life and the liberty of a people. His voice rang out here in trumpet tones. He stood, a figure grand and imposing—one of the world's great men. He fought in this Westminster, and won. And here have stood sinister men upon whom was the lust for the flowing of blood. They have stood here, and also they have won. And here have stood great men of noble purpose. Here stood John Bright—that grand fighter for peace. And here stood the great and strange Jew, Disraeli. This Westminster has echoed and resounded with the matchless oratory of Gladstone—that wonderful and complex man of genius. Great men have come—and stood in—and passed from it. They have gone to rest and to dust, but their names and their influence live.

Into it men have been for ever coming and going. They fought together, and then passed onward. They have done battle in this place of real issues. They have been themselves, as men who fight must.

IX.

A STRANGE place. A maze of beautiful chambers and rooms and cloisters and spaces and chapels. A place of the present and the past and the future. A place telling of the power and might and splendour of England. A wonderful place. A place of significance, magical and strange.

Westminster.

How beautiful the name. A name of strange romance.

What tales Westminster could tell of the life and growth of England. What tales it could tell of the Saxons of old, of the mailed Normans, of strange comings and goings, of terrible doings. It could lift the veil from long gone, dim events. It could tell of solemn happenings. This old place of story. This link between the past and present. What will it tell the generations to come of us ?

This place standing by the dark old river.

This old, solemn, beautiful place !

LABOUR PICTURES.

I.—THE POTTER'S WHEEL.

It is made of ash and the thrower works upon it now in the same way as did the thrower thousands of years ago in Egypt.

It whirls and whirls and he fashions the wet, soft clay upon it into what shape he wills. The shapeless mass grows up into beautiful, spinning forms under the deft press and touch of his hands. Now he makes the wheel go slowly, now he makes it go faster and faster.

He must have a sure eye and a sense of weight and form and size to guide him. And he must have a still further sense. The sense of the beautiful.

As you watch him working you feel that vast lapses of time make but little differences in essential things. The hand of the man of now is no more than was the hand of the man of Egypt. The beginning and the end of making ware from the earth is the potter's wheel.

Pottery that is made by the actual touch and press of the human hand is before all other pottery. Nothing that is made by a mould or by a machine stands near it. Its grain flows evenly in one direction and it stands well the test of use and time. The touch of the worker gives to it a temperament.

In the beginning the clay comes into the slip-house of the pottery. Here it is washed and cleaned and churned and mixed and prepared. And then it goes from hand to hand and from place to place till in the end it is put to the test of fire.

A natural clay will not of itself suffice for the purpose of making pottery. Clays must be mixed proportionately with other clays to get the best results.

The workshop is filled with a curious, faintly pungent smell. It is the smell of clay going through the different processes:—as it is being shaped on the potter's wheel—as it is being moulded—as it is drying—as it is baking and hardening in the intense heat of the furnace. This faintly pungent smell of clay as it is being worked can never be forgotten. It is not only in the workshop but it is right through the whole of the town—indeed it is right through all the pottery towns—right through the nine miles of houses and up and down streets. Everywhere. An all-pervading, faintly pungent smell of clay.

Here are the men putting the saggers into the oven. The saggers are round-shaped vessels of coarse earthenware. They hold the pottery that is expected to emerge sound and clear from the ordeal of the terrible heat. They will allow the air to come to the ware gradually, gradually till in the end it is baked and wrought to an absolute hardness and sound-

ness—or is cracked. These saggers are piled high up—one on the other—in the great hive-shaped oven.

The oven itself is enclosed in a huge, circular bottle-shaped chimney. Between the outer wall of the oven and the inner wall of the chimney there is a clear space of about four feet. These odd-looking circular chimneys are the first things that one notices in a pottery town. At once they let out the smoke from the furnace and they protect the oven from draughts. They keep the heat that is brought upon the ware absolutely steady.

Up goes the heat in the oven. Up and up and up till at last there is reached twelve hundred degrees. The firemen gauge this tremendous heat by the colour of bits of earthenware which they have placed beforehand in the oven so that they can see them. And then the fire is allowed to slow gradually down. And when the heat has gone from the oven the saggers are lifted out and the ware is examined to see if it has passed through the fire-test sound and well.

The firing of the ware takes a day and a half.

Here is the dipping shed where the ware is dipped into the white, liquid glaze. Men and women are working at troughs about four feet long by two feet deep and across. Here is a man dipping plates. Fastened round the thumb of his right hand is a piece of leather from which a hook is projecting. He grasps

the side of the trough with his left hand as he bends and dips the plate into the white liquid. He gives it a slight shake in the glaze as he is dipping it and then he lays it along with others on a board in front of him. He handles all the plates with his right hand. The hook which projects from the leather round his thumb enables him to grasp the plate right across and to slip it in his hand whilst he is dipping it so that the glaze will get equally to the whole surface of the plate. This man is quick and dexterous. He can dip a hundred dozen plates in an hour. He makes the leather and hook for his thumb himself as do all the men who dip ware.

This white, liquid glaze into which the men and women are dipping ware has lead in it. The work is dangerous.

The women wear long over-garments which come up tight to the throat. Their heads are covered with a hood so as to lessen the chance of the lead getting to their hair. In this is the danger to the women. The lead getting on to their hair! And it seems to me that it would be a good thing if women were not allowed to work in the dipping shed at all. A man with his hair shorn close to his scalp would be in far less danger from the floating particles of lead.

The walls of the dipping shed are covered with printed directions as to the way to avoid the danger. But to be quite frank in the matter these directions appear to be of the

nature of counsels of perfection. They ask a trifle too much of human nature. Anyone knows that it is impossible for working people to keep absolutely clean—at least while they are working. It seems to me that the people who are responsible for these notices lack humour.

The way that coloured designs are put upon pottery is simple and ingenious. They are first printed on large sheets of paper. These sheets are given to girls who cut out the designs and paste them on to the ware. The ware is covered with size and the impression of the design is transferred on to it. The paper is then brushed off and the design and the colour of it is burned into the ware when it is being fired in the oven.

Packing the ware when it is finished into crates is a trade in itself. I saw a man packing plates. He sat on the ground and both his hands were going at once. On his right were the plates, on his left was a big heap of loose straw. He would grasp a plate and a small wisp of straw—put the plate down between his legs and at the same instant spread the straw over it. Plates and straw seemed to fly. He worked so quickly that one could hardly see how he did it. The plates rose up in a stack as if they were issuing out of the ground, and as it rose he rose with it. When the stack was up to the height he wanted, he stopped—picked up the packed stack of plates

—and put them over alongside other stacks. Then he sat down and began all over again. His hands were the last through which the ware passed.

II.—THE POTTER'S ART.

THESE ware vessels were in the beginning but soft, spinning masses of clay that grew up into shape under the press of the thrower's hand. Now they are shining and hard and beautiful, and they are grouped here together in this great room. They are glowing with designs in many colours and tints and shades. They have come from out the test of an intense fire. And they have gained from the fire wonderful properties. They are at once hard as adamant and of delicacy of shape and of an exquisite shading and colouring. These beautiful pieces of pottery that you see before you would be the same thousands of years hence as they are now. The terrible fire-crucible through which they have passed has given them all but immortality. These exquisitely fashioned pieces of clay would live on and on through the beginnings and the ends of empires. They would far outlive the coins of a Cæsar.

The art of the potter began in the dim, profound past. It may have been that he had begun to practise it even before he had found out the strange and wonderful secret of fire. He shaped clay into rude vessels and left them to dry in the sun. The genesis of the art was the need and the longing for a thing of

use which is indeed the genesis of all true art.

As ages passed the art of the potter advanced and man learned to make the vessels of clay true and sound and lasting and to put upon them the impress of his imagination.

Here before you is a vase. It is made here in this modern English town where for ever the smoke rises, darkening the air. The town is dark so that this wonderful piece of ware shall be made. A price must be paid for all things.

This vase that is born of the hand of man and born again of fire! How beautiful it is. Gold will buy it, but gold cannot pay the price of its making.

The people of these English pottery towns take pride in the ware that is made in them. They wish it that it shall be beautiful and strong, and that it shall have the sound, clear ring when struck. They want the outside world to think well of the work that is sent forth. And it is because of the spirit and the wish of these people that the English pottery outranks all other pottery. It was Englishmen who brought the art in Europe to its full life.

For me the art of pottery is a far finer art than the art of making pictures or statuary. It is beautiful and it is useful. It is a cynical philosophy that puts it forth that it is sufficient for a beautiful thing to be beautiful. Art for art's sake is a foolish and lying shibboleth. What can be more beautiful than *a*

ship of sails going before the wind? And what can be more useful? And how beautiful is the shape of the blade of a plough or an oar, or the wing of a bird. Beauty and fitness are one and the same thing. When fitness is absolutely realized you have the thing that is beautiful.

Here is a cup. Take it in your hand and look at it. It is light and beautifully rounded and though it is fragile it is hard as the hardest steel. Its surface is smooth and shining. Hold it up to the light and see how softly and wonderfully it shines. Once the clay of which this cup is made lay buried in the earth. It was but common, dull clay. And now it is light and rounded and hard as the hardest steel, and shining. Surely to take clay from out the earth and to change it into this cup in your hand is a wonderful art.

Here is an urn covered with strange pictures and figures. And here is a plate on the wall with interlaced edges which give forth the effect of being woven. And here is a yellow urn of great size. And here is an urn of light blue.

The pottery here in this great room tells in silence the history of man through countless ages. Here is a rude vessel that was dried in the sun perhaps ten thousand years ago. It was brought here from a distant part of the world. The name is not even known of the race from whence this vessel came. Not only is this piece of rude ware far behind the history

that is known—it is far behind even legend and tradition. It may have been made at a time in the world when man had to fight terribly for his existence with monstrous creeping and flying things. It was perhaps one of the first signs of the awakening of that mysterious and splendid gift of intellect that was in the end destined to make man supreme over all the living things of earth, air, and water. This rude, simple vessel of clay. Its eloquence is far past the eloquence of the world's greatest book. It is here before the eyes—tangible and actual now as it was at the time it was made. A thing from the hand.

And here in this great room are vessels that our forefathers fashioned before the coming of Cæsar. They were used in the huts in the thick forests of the early Britain of long ago.

And here again is the beautiful ware of the end of the eighteenth century. It was then that the art of pottery reached to its fulness and splendour. A great English potter passed his life in the attaining to and the grasping of perfection in the art. And from his successful endeavouring these pottery towns sprung up to their world-wide greatness.

More than all the arts the art of the potter expresses the power and the triumph of the skill of the human hand.

In this art one may read the needs and the progress and the aspirations of man. One may read man in his entirety. Not alone for the king or for the great man was pottery

made. It was for the slave even as it was for the master—for the conquered even as the conqueror. Those who worked at it did not work at it to fulfil the behests and the caprices of people in high places. Nor did they work at it for the expression of their own glorification and egotism. They made useful things and as the time passed their skill became so great that in the end these things expressed beauty in its highest sense because of their absolute fitness to the required end.

One thinks of all these things as one goes through these pottery towns. The sky above is dull and heavy because of the smoke that is always rising. And the towns themselves are dull-coloured and heavy of look. But in them are made beautiful things. And the people in these towns take pride in the things that are being made. The world cannot and does not pay the price for these things that the people of the towns must pay in the making of them. But this is inevitable. It is the law of life and of the world that no one shall really pay for work but the worker.

THE MAGIC BOARDS.



I.—GOING ON THE STAGE.

THE idea of going on the stage first came to me when I worked in the engine shop in Miles Platting in Manchester. I had a vague ambition to become a great singer. But how to accomplish this ambition was beyond me. It was as if my eyes were fixed upon some far distant, beautiful world between myself and which lay a vast, impossible gulf.

Whenever the Carl Rosa Opera Company came to Manchester I went and crushed my way up through the narrow passage to the gallery of the theatre where they were playing. Getting the shilling to go was hard, but the music was so wonderful to me that I in no way minded the effort I had to make. I would have gone hungry to hear the glorious, thrilling music. It was as if I were entering a wonderland of unimaginable beauty. The grand voices rang up from the stage. Those were the days when Joseph Maas and Leslie Crotty were in the company—those artists with the glorious voices.

How their voices rang out in "Mignon." Never will I forget the singing of Maas—or Crotty's singing of the music of "Lothario." And the singing of the music at once divine and

human of "Faust"! To enter such a heaven was almost worth the living of the slave's life led. What mattered years of darkness as long as I could hear this music now and then!

It is our slaves of labour who have in them the most real appreciation of art. Here in England—as in all countries—they live in a hell of dirt and hunger and grime, and so they see with vividness the glimpse of beauty that passes now and then before them.

This magical and transcendent stage. How shall I tell of the effect it had upon me? It was as if I were chained down in a dark pit and as if a vision of light and freedom and beauty and warmth were passing before.

Chained down in a pit and seeing this vision pass!

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And so it came to pass that I managed to join a singing class, and in time I grew to have a knowledge of music and the vague ambition I speak of came upon me. Perhaps I might enter into this beautiful world myself? But how?

One morning I stopped away from work and I went and stood outside the stage door of the theatre where the Carl Rosa Opera Company were going to play. It was Monday morning and the scenery was being carried in on to the stage. And the stage manager—a tall, fine looking man—stood near giving directions to the men who were carrying the scenery in.

Should I ask him if there was a chance to be taken on in the chorus? The day before a man had told me that sometimes people were taken on in the chorus. And so I was standing, looking at the stage manager and trying to get courage enough to ask him. But I was afraid to go up and speak. And finally he walked in on the stage.

I stood around for some time and at last a man came and spoke to me. He turned out to be one who belonged to the chorus. There was a look of worry in his face and his clothes were shabby. I remember wondering why this should be.

I talked to him, and he told me that I would have to see the conductor. The stage manager was not the right person to see! This chorus singer was an Irishman who belonged to Dublin. Though he looked worried he was civil spoken and sympathetic.

Hours passed and at last I managed to see the conductor as he was leaving the theatre. He was a kindly looking, bearded man with a hoarse voice and he soon made me understand that there was absolutely no chance of my getting into the company. It wasn't worth while even to try my voice, he said.

And so the matter passed.

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Again I was trying to get upon the stage. But the scene of my efforts lay this time in another part of the world. I had broken

away from England, I had crossed a vast ocean and I was in a strange part of the world. I was penniless, but I had strength and youth and hope. Life was before me and I felt that I would somehow win for myself a great place in it. Youth and strength and hope. They are the finest gifts that life has to bestow.

Again I was asking the conductor of an opera company if I could be taken on. He also told me that it was impossible. He, too, was kindly, for he asked me if I were hard up, and when I admitted that I was he got me to sit down and have a meal. The people of the stage are the most kindly people in the world.

And so the matter passed again. And I became one who went from place to place—a tramp who now and then worked as a labourer. Often I thought of my life in England. And there were times when I almost wished myself back there, for life in this vast America was hard. And I suffered a great deal of hunger and cold and privation. But the feeling of being chained down in a dark pit was leaving me. I felt myself growing abler and stronger. I felt that the time must come when I would be able to manage better. I had learned the bitter truth that the world, despite its smug lies, really accounted labour with the hands as a curse and a degradation. Why this should be I was not philosopher enough to tell. I only knew that the fact had been driven into me.

Labour with the hands! It was a thing to shun.

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I was in a place called Cincinnati. All through the day I had been wandering around trying to find something to do. I had been watching out on the river side for a chance to handle freight. But nothing had turned up, and I was wandering dolefully along Vine Street. That night I would have no place to sleep, but it was the hunger that bothered me most. It was now about seven in the evening.

And there on a hoarding was the bill of an opera company that was playing in the town. It was a comic opera called "Rip Van Winkle."

I determined to try my luck. I was looking shabby and trampish, but the roughing about I had gone through had taken the nervousness out of me. I had learned the secret of success—which is to always work to the full a chance when it comes along.

I managed to get the stage door keeper to tell the conductor that I wanted to see him. I had a great deal of trouble over this because of my unkempt appearance, but in the end I managed to interview the conductor.

The old story. He was full up.

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Two years after that I found myself on the Pacific Coast in 'Frisco. I had gone through a lot and done all sorts of things, and I'm afraid that I was a somewhat hardened and

tough specimen as I lounged up Market Street from the city front where I had deserted from a ship. But 'Frisco was a place of all sorts of specimens, tough and otherwise, and I felt thoroughly at home.

The desire was still with me to get on the stage. And I was bound for the Tivoli Opera House to try my luck. It was a theatre curiously enough where there was a stock opera company, and I had heard about it off up in Vancouver where I used to sing now and then at gatherings of miners.

I went into the opera house and interviewed the conductor.

It must have been that the conductor and I were made to be friends, or perhaps it was that my voice shone up a little, for I was engaged for the chorus after I sang a song.

And so it came to pass that my ambition was realised.

I was going on the stage.

II.—FIRST DAYS.

My dreams had all come true. At last I was on the stage. True, my wages were not so much as I would have got had I been working as a labourer, but the time one has is far more to the point than any wages one may get. There is such a thing as buying money too dearly.

My mind was full of dreams. I saw glowing pictures of myself in the future as a great singer, for I felt that it was only necessary for me to get a chance to show the world what I could do.

But even though I wished for the time to come when I would take my place as a great artist, still my ambition in no way took from the joy and wonder of the present. It was not as it was when the ambition to go upon the stage came upon me years before in England. Then I had been working in darkness as a slave. But now I was actually in the bright and wonderful world itself. And it would only be a question of time before everything I wished for came to me.

The impulse that lies behind the desire to go upon the stage is the impulse that people have to express themselves. This instinct for expression is the mainspring of all human desire. People wish to realize themselves. And

this is the dominant instinct in all human beings. It is at once the welding and disintegrating principle of all life.

It is this law or instinct that governs all things and not the law of the survival of the fittest. The survival of the fittest! This phrase only caught the world because it summed up the philosophy of those who had chanced mainly by foul means to get on top.

It is the desire to express and to realize one's-self that governs humanity. And this is the secret of the wish to go upon the stage. The actual world is not large enough for all to carve. And so there is left the strange world of make-believe and dreams—the world of the magic boards.

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The stage is a world of dreams. You go and sit and see life pass before you, a wondrous, phantasmagoric picture real and unreal, at once full of emotion and a strange sense of equipoise. Before you is bared the most secret and intimate feelings of human beings. Before you unfolds change. You see working before you the most secret movings of the mystery of chance. Human beings appear and disappear and pass and repass. True, the pictures of the stage have often that appearance of arranged effect that is called convention. But behind the appearance of arranged effect is the fact that you are looking upon a picture composed of beings that are as

actual as yourself. They are as real as yourself, and still they are unreal. And this is the essence of the charm and magic of the stage—The fact that real human beings are moving in a picture.

It is not always the play that is the thing. These human beings passing in the picture are often of more meaning than the picture itself. Men there are who say that there are plays and plays. But in the last analysis there is a value in a comic opera scene even as there is a value in a scene in a play made by some egotistic thinker. There is gold in all stage pictures. Let but the actors play their parts. To see a beautiful woman on the stage is to possess her in the best and finest sense. To behold the courage of the hero is to be thrilled and made more of a man yourself.

Away with plays that portray disease. Let not the stage be made into a pulpit. The world is cursed with pulpits. Let us have plays that are at once fine and beautiful and heroic and merry. Let us have plays that pass before us as dreams. Let us have phantasm and strangeness and music and beauty. Let us have romance and wonder and charm. The stage is the world of dreams.

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But I must tell of the life I led now in the chorus of the opera company. It was the first time that beauty had come into my life. I had suddenly emerged from an underworld.

For a long time I had struggled and laboured. For a long time I had passed hither and thither and from place to place. But always I had been in darkness. There had come but to me occasional glimpses of light and beauty. These glimpses had come to me when I struggled up into the gallery to hear the opera in far-away England. I had seen them in wonderful bursts of sun-splendour as I hauled on ropes on some ship-deck in the heaving ocean. They had come to me in the midst of great lone mountains. But these glimpses of light and beauty came to me as I lived in darkness. Always I was a slave, always I was labouring. Or I was a tramp, wandering houseless and homeless along.

But now I had come up into the light. I was living here in this beautiful and sunlit California in the midst of music and dreams.

How beautiful were these girls who sang in the opera. It thrilled me to look upon them, to be near them. In the life I had lived women had had no part. I had lived the iron, celibate life of the men of the lower class who wander along.

It was fine to stand on the stage and let one's voice ring out in the great chorus—to stand silent in the full light and to break forth with the voice at the sign from the conductor—to listen to the clear strong voices of the soloists—to wait in the entrances for the cue to march on—to sit and talk in the dressing room till the music came that warned

us that it was time to be going up the narrow, winding stairs on to the stage to be ready for an entrance—to take part in the fights and the rushes—to listen to the rising and falling and swelling out of the orchestra—to hear the first sounds of the overture as we were dressing.

I felt that some day I, too, would be one of those solo singers whose voices rang out with such clearness and dominance.

But I felt that I could afford to wait for this time that would surely come. My cup of happiness was filled to the brim.

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After the performance at night was over Harry Moore and I used to go along the streets together talking of our ambitions. Moore was one of my comrades in the chorus, one whom I liked especially. His ideal was to be a great Shakespearian actor. He told me that he was only singing here in the chorus as a means to that end. He had studied the plays of Shakespeare most thoroughly and he knew speeches in nearly all the plays, speeches which he used to declaim to me as we went along together. When the chance came he would get in with a travelling company and go off east—to New York! And in time he would get to London! We were very great friends, and I have often wondered what became of him. He was one who really possessed talent—but talent does not always get a chance. He used to tell me

of a man he once knew who went away from 'Frisco. This man was a bass singer and in the end he sang the part of "Mephistopheles" in Covent Garden in far-away London.

We used to go along talking of the accomplishing of our ambitions. The future looked bright and clear to us.

It seems to me that the name of the bass who sang in Covent Garden was Franz Webber. But I may have the name wrong. It is a long time ago since Moore and I talked of him.

The men in the chorus were all good fellows. A little jealous of one another, and of the principals, of course, but still kindly. Some of them were men who had knocked about the world. They were Bohemians who had been educated in the only school that is worth anything.

And so passed away my first days on the stage.

III.—MUSIC AND STAGE.



THIS quickstep in "Carmen."

In it is at once the joy and the sadness and the exhilaration and tragedy of life. For me it contains the whole of the meaning of the opera. It comes in upon one and passes. And it leaves an echo for ever after it.

Of all the operas I have ever heard for me the greatest is "Carmen." It touches the core of life. It may be that there are musicians that have reached loftier heights than Bizet. It may be that Wagner has touched a note of greater wonder in his music-pictures. But the music of Wagner is dreadful, destructive and unsane—evil, abnormal music with no true pathos in it and without the consonance and balance of real tragedy.

This "Carmen." It tells a story of life. And through the telling there weaves and interweaves feeling and emotion. In it there are times of fire and beauty and romance and adventure and love and hate and tragedy. It is an absolute picture of life as we know it. The fine strange beauty that lives in life shines splendid and transfigured. And the tragedy rises with dignity. And there is in this opera

joy and laughter and smiles. And the allure of love. And the bravery of men of combat. And over all hangs the shadow of sorrow and tragedy. But under the shadow is light and beauty and the thrilling magical joy of life. This supreme artist, Bizet, perceived the truth that though life is sorrowful and dark there is still in it joy and light. And so it comes that "Carmen" holds the soul and the senses. Give me this opera over all other operas.

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And "Maritana."

It was a joy to take part in the singing of this music at once sane and beautiful and romantic. In "Maritana" there is an effect of bright clearness—as if one were where the sun was shining in cloudless blue. If the music of "Maritana" be the music of the past, then all hail to the music of the past! Let the music of the past be the music of the present and the future.

I liked the music of the "Mascotte."

> "Now that the winter time is over,
> Lads and lasses gaily meet."

So went the opening chorus tuned to the life and the joy of spring. To sing in this chorus, as one moved and danced, was to live. The delicious, fresh music rang through the theatre.

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I may be wrong, but to me it seems as if the most effective parts of all operas are the

choruses. There are times when an artist will produce a great effect by the singing of a solo, but even then the effect is never so complete as the effect of a fine chorus finely sung. Composers have not worked this mine of effect as they might have done. Their idea is too often but to bring out masses of sound to support the soloists. Where is the musician who will compose an opera where there will be no principals—where all the effects will be got by the chorus? Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" is an example of a composer getting effects, unique and splendid, out of the chorus. I have not heard Mascagni's later works—and so I am not conversant with the reason for their not making the impression that "Cavalleria" made—but I wonder if he worked the possibilities of the chorus in them as he worked it in the great music-picture that made him famous.

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We had no matinées at the Tivoli Opera House, and so we were free to attend the matinées when they were given at the other theatres. Being of the profession we were allowed to go in free, unless it happened that the house was packed. Theatres will never keep out money to let people in free, and professionals, of course, never expect it. But usually in 'Frisco there was room to get in to a matinée.

And so it was that I got in to hear Rubinstein's "Nero," which was being given by a

travelling opera company at the Grand Opera House in Mission Street. The part of "Nero" was sung by Ludwig. Ludwig was a favourite singer of mine. I had heard him years before in the Carl Rosa Company in Manchester, and hearing him here in 'Frisco was as if I were meeting an old friend. The sound of his splendid and sympathetic baritone voice brought me back to the days when I was wondering how I would escape out into the world.

The Sabbath was not kept in 'Frisco as it is kept in respectable England. The theatres were open. Indeed Sunday night was the best night of the week as far as the getting of an audience was concerned. The theatres were packed. The managers always looked to Sunday night to pull up the business if it had been slack through the week. In 'Frisco Sunday was a day of enjoyment. Life on that day swung along easily and gaily. People didn't think it was necessary to become smug and gloomy.

And my mind began to grow here in the beautiful, sunlit town. I had the leisure to think and to become myself. I got very little wages, but such as they were they were enough to provide me with a place to sleep and with food to eat. A place to sleep and food to eat! That surely is enough for anyone.

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The days on which a new piece was to be put on were days full of excitement. There was

the long, last rehearsal when everything seemed to go wrong. And after the rehearsal there was the final visit to the costumier to see if everything fitted just right. The costumier was a big, red-faced, clever woman who was somewhat brusque with the chorus singers. And after that there was the going to the perruquier's in Market Street to see about a wig. One's own hair seldom comes up to the requirements of the stage.

We were in through the stage door and into the dressing room earlier than usual on that first night. And there was nervousness amongst us—as we were making up in the dressing room—as to whether or not the piece would be a go. Chorus singer felt as anxious as principal. And all determined to do their very best.

The overture! We were now dressed and ready and anxious. We, chorus singers, had usually to open matters. And the stage-manager would come to us, just before the curtain rang up, and exhort us to do our best. Everything depends on the beginning, he would tell us.

There was the quick, brisk whirr of the electric bell and the curtain was quickly rising. Already the opening music of the chorus was going with a swinging rush and swell. The flying music was at once familiar and unfamiliar. Often and often we had heard it. We had heard it and heard it till it had almost become part of ourselves. But we had never

heard it as we were hearing it now—with the curtain rising up, and the sudden blinding glare of light, and the hush, and the anxious face of the conductor turned full upon us, and the blurred faces of the audience off in shadows behind the glaring light.

The sign! The conductor had given it to us, and we were singing before we knew it. The sign had come to us in the midst of a chaos of light and shadows and sounds and confusion and the glimpse of blurred expectant faces. We were singing as it were before we felt our voices. And all at once we were at one with our pilot, our conductor. We had command of ourselves. We were singing with a conscious skill and precision and power. Singing with eyes on the swinging, flashing baton. Stopping now whilst other voices were ringing out. Attacking boldly at the sign. Our conductor was guiding us through a host of whirling sweeping and rushing sounds. He was our trusted chief. We were following him. As in battle.

Applause. The audience were applauding us. We, the chorus, had done well. It was a good augury. The piece was now safe. All that the others had to do was to keep up the impression that we had made. And we trooped off the stage exultant and happy.

But still we waited round the entrances anxious that others should keep up the good work that we had begun. There was little talking and chatting in the dressing rooms that

night. We just rushed in, to make the change of costume, and rushed out again.

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It is a glorious thing to be one of a company of players who have made a success with a piece on the first night. Everybody is happy. Everybody is glad. Everyone will now reap the fruit of their long rehearsals. The piece will have a run and they can take life easy. Here is the apotheosis of their labours. Their efforts have been crowned with success. There will be no grumbling by the management. There will be no changing of parts. For the piece is a go!

It is fine to be one of a company of players at a time such as this.

IV.—DRIFTING.

THE time came at last when I left the chorus of the Tivoli. It was a great wrench to have to part from the music and the people I had got to know.

At first the thought was with me to go back to the sea again. But I had had enough of knocking around and doing odd jobs of labour. Whatever I did I was determined that it was not going to be labouring work.

And perhaps I would easily get work again on the stage in 'Frisco!

But it did not seem easy. For there were a great many actors and singers knocking around waiting for things to turn up. They had either left companies out there, or the companies they had been with had broken up or disbanded.

'Frisco was a delightful place, but it was an awkward place to get away from—if you had no money. Thousands of miles of land to the east and thousands of miles of water to the west were between you and anywhere. You couldn't leave the place. You were tired of it, and still you liked it.

By this time I had begun to see that there would be some slight difficulty about the realizing of my ambitions to become a great

singer. Somehow people did not quite share my own view of my talents. I had confidence enough of course, but confidence by no means means either power or talent. I have had this truth forced upon me. I know that there is some kind of a proverb, or adage, or aphorism, or whatever you like, that runs to the effect that confidence will do everything. But the world is full of these lying proverbs or adages, or whatever they are called. I have seen so many confident and bouncing people who could do absolutely nothing that I am almost beginning to believe that modesty is a sign of talent—though I must confess that it seems impossible that this can be so. At any rate modesty is a most dangerous quality to possess. You are so apt to be snowed under.

Whilst I am on this particular war-path, I may as well slay another adage or aphorism. It is the one that runs to the effect that there are people who are always looking out for talent, and that if you possess it you are sure to be discovered.

Don't believe it, my friend. Don't believe it. If you have talent you must discover it yourself. You must force it upon the notice of people. And a word in your ear. The world has enough talent already. It would like people to turn to and do a little real work. Of course people won't—I amongst the number. But that is by the way. The main point is that there are not thousands of eager people

looking out for talent in others. They are too busy thinking of and looking out for themselves. If you possess talent you must be at least as bold and as confident as the pushful person who possesses none. You must tell people about yourself, you must assert yourself. Otherwise you will get snowed under. Modesty is a most beautiful and well-mannered and graceful quality, but it is the poorest kind of poor ally for a man of talent to possess. If you possess it, part from it, sadly if you will —but part from it. And remember that the world is an old conservative world that is in no vital need of any man's particular brand of genius.

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I got two or three chances to show what I could do, but I regret to say that I did not fulfil expectations. My voice somehow seemed to lack the power and the richness that belonged to the voices of Galassi and Ludwig and other great baritones. This was apparent even to myself, and I suppose it was more than apparent to other people.

I remember once talking to the organist of a Catholic chapel about my singing and so impressing him that he asked me to sing an Ave Maria for him the following Sunday morning. I appeared in the choir at the time appointed, and the organ played the prelude and I began. Well, the Ave Maria was a failure as far as my rendering of it was concerned. And at the end of the service it was only the polite-

ness of the organist that covered my retreat, so to speak.

Still, I had my visions of the future. But they were becoming more faint, and my ambitions as far as singing was concerned were becoming a little chastened. And gradually I began to be satisfied with the idea of singing in the chorus. Indeed, when I was out of an engagement singing in the chorus grew to be my ideal. I began to look no farther. It was forced upon me that that was about as high as I could hope to rise in the operatic world.

The life of the stage, however, still exercised the same fascination over me. Even the precariousness that it holds for one of no special talent did not rob it of this. When I was out of an engagement I used to go along thinking how fine it would be to get back again to the life. I wanted to be amongst the people, to hear the music, to sing, to see the lights, and the faces of the audience.

I got work with a dramatic company. But I did not like it as well as opera. I was not very good at speaking lines, and I found it intensely difficult to get into the spirit of a part.

And things grew hard for me. I used to stand on the corners of the streets waiting for something to turn up. 'Frisco is a town that lends itself especially to dreaming and easily waiting—a bright, sunlit, romantic place where life glides calmly along.

I got in with a travelling opera company,

and once more I was happy. We played through and around California, but the regular paying of salaries was a somewhat weak point with this company. However, this mattered little as long as I could get something to eat.

And in the end the desire came to me very strongly to leave California. I was almost as anxious to get away from it as I had been to get away from England years before. But I did not want to leave the stage. I wanted to leave it if possible with a company. I could, of course, have taken a ship out of it. But I was afraid if I took to sailoring again I would sink back into the old groove of hard work. I wanted to retain the standard of life to which I had risen.

It is a tragic thing this sinking back into an old, lower groove of life. After a long struggle you have risen—you have bettered yourself. And things are going along well. You are beginning to feel that it is a fine thing to live. And a turn of the wheel comes, and you are sinking back again. Of course you know well the old groove. But your knowledge of it only makes you shrink from it the more. And you struggle with all the power that is in you not to be pushed back into it. It is as if you were being pushed down into death. And philosophy is no aid to you, for philosophy is a thing that is apt to leave you at trying and vital times. Philosophy is usually the friend and the ally of those that are contented.

This being pushed back into the old, lower groove is a hard thing.

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At last I had managed to leave San Francisco. I had crossed the thousands of miles of America with a company of players and I was here on the Atlantic coast in the great town of New York. And I had an engagement here in a theatre. But the old dreams of fame had gone from me. But still there was the glamour of the stage. How different was this New York from the old sun-lit 'Frisco with its calmness and charm. This vast town of the Atlantic coast was a place to put the fear into one. It was the first really great town I had ever been in. It had the loneliness and the isolation and the coldness of the great town. The people who passed seemed to take interest in no one.

But I was here on the stage!

V.—NOT PLAYING.

AFTER all is said and done there is no life that has about it such magic and glamour as the life of the stage.

I know that when I was on the stage I thought it the finest life in the world. And to tell the truth, though years have lapsed, I am still of the same opinion. How joyfully I used to wend my way to the rehearsals. I was going off to a strange, magic, enchanted world of imagination. What mattered it if the stage was cold and dark? It would be lit up by my imagination. I would see the gradual, slow unfolding of the play and its meaning.

Mind you, I had no real talent for the stage. Or—on looking back—it seems to me that I had no real talent. At any rate if I did have talent it turned out that it was never appreciated. I never came to the front in any way. It may be that my character was too unplastic and egotistical for the work of the stage. I usually only played small parts in dramas, or sang in choruses in opera companies.

I was on the stage about three years. And those years were the happiest in my life. There was the most glow in them. And often I think now that I would like to go on the stage again, even if I had to play but the same, old, minor parts.

Of course I often suffered during these three years. Being but one of the crowd, I was often out of an engagement. And there were times when I suffered hunger and indeed times when I had no place to sleep, for the wages of such a one as myself was barely enough for keep even while working.

And this is what I am coming to:—The effect upon me when I was not playing. It was bad to be hard up, but worse than this was the feeling of intense depression that was upon me through not being able to go to the theatre. I was cut off from all that I had interest in—from all that meant anything. I was thrust outside. I was alone. Everything about me was vacant and dull and lifeless. All the old ties were severed. I was shut out from my friends. Even the people I did not like in the company now appeared to my mind in the guise of friends whom I had not properly appreciated.

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Sometimes it was that the company in which I had been playing had been broken up and disbanded, and again it was that I had been turned away because I did not do the work sufficiently well.

It is impossible for one outside to realize the family feeling that springs up between a company of players. To use a paradox there is a liking even between the people who dislike each other. This family feeling exists even above the jealousies and intrigues. It annuls

the bitterness that is engendered through the putting on of side by the one who has the more talent or the one who is the more fortunate. A company of players is a family bound by the finest and best of all ties—comradeship. There is bickering and quarrelling and intriguing. Players are human. But when the last word is said the company is a family bound by the tie of comradeship.

The first night of not playing was perhaps the worst night of all. Or rather it was the night I felt the most keenly.

Through the day it seemed to me as if I would be unable to pass through it. And then the time would gradually come when I ought to be going to the theatre. Here was seven o'clock! Now was the time when I ought to be walking along to the old, familiar place. And now was the time when I ought to be dressing and making up.

And the time had now come for the hearing of the music of the orchestra, coming faintly through the spaces under the stage and through the walls of the dressing room. But on this night I was not playing!

But still I could hear the faint music of the overture. As ghost-sounds. And there were the lights and the wings and the broad stage with its slight downward slope and the faces of the far out audience—the intent faces seen through a haze. I was away from it, out of it all. I was one who was thrust out of life. I could see the glow of the wonderful life out

from the darkness in which I was buried. I could hear the voices and the music. I could see the lights. All from the midst of my loneliness. I suffered as suffered Tantalus.

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And when the first night had passed there was the loneliness of the next day. There was no rehearsal to go to.

Want was before me, but I felt that the least of all. The fear was upon me that perhaps I would never be on the stage again. I would perhaps never again enter the wonderful land of lights and imagination and music and comradeship. Where was I to get my next engagement? How long was I to be out?

Even though want was upon me I had no idea of looking for anything else to do. It seemed to me in these first hard days as though leaving the stage altogether was like leaving life.

Outside people were not real to me. Their ways were not my ways. Their ideas were not my ideas. It is difficult to analyze the reason why the lives of players isolate them from the lives of others. Despite what some successful stage people say they are never really at one with other people. They are really happiest, and they certainly do their best work, when they mix only with their kind.

I used to go along the streets wondering when I would get an engagement. And now and then I would call into the office of an agent.

But I always detested these places. Agents. Well, I won't bother much about them here. I will only say that if players ever suffer ignominy and degradation it is mainly through these harpies and scoundrels. Why stage people allow them to vampire them is beyond me. If shame is ever put upon the stage these bloodsuckers are usually the cause of it. People of the stage! You will never get back to your old selves till you shake them off.

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And I used to wander, often hungry. And sometimes it would come to pass that I would meet one with whom I had played in the happy days when I had an engagement. And if there was anything going all was well. In this sense stage people are the best and the kindest in the world.

Not playing. It was hard, but now and then the darkness would be lit up by a gleam of hope. I would meet a friend who would tell me of a chance that was coming along —of a play or an opera that was going to be put on and for which people would be wanted. And we would talk together over the prospects, for often as not my friend was one who was in the same plight as myself.

And we would go along talking and dreaming of the good fortune that would most likely come our way.

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